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Fall 1988

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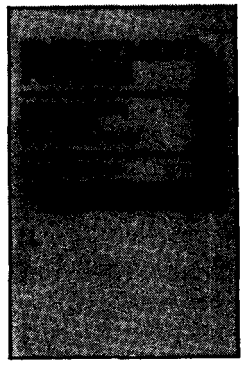

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About the Election

A little symposium among some Dissent *editors, each of whom speaks for him or herself.*

Nicolaus Mills

There is something fundamentally wrong in the country, and the country knows it. It is not that families sit around the dinner table talking about deindustrialization and federal deficits and the new underclass. It is rather that people feel what is wrong in their daily lives. They feel it in supermarket parking lots where Toyotas outnumber Chevrolets. They feel it in cities where they pass the homeless sleeping in doorways. They feel it in suburbs where second salaries are cut in half by the cost of day care.

It is a feeling that the Republicans are trying to deny, and it may well cost them in 1988. The GOP may be able to explain the Crash of '87 as a necessary correction in the stock market and Irangate as a diplomatic initiative. But the country's gut feeling that something is wrong is not going away. The fear of downward mobility—of farms too in debt to pass on, of private colleges too expensive to attend—is real. If the Republican candidate were Ronald Reagan, it still might be possible to get away with insisting America is "standing proud." Reagan could run as if 1988 were 1980 and the choice was between him and Jimmy Carter. But for George Bush, nostalgia won't work. He is still the resumé candidate as far as the country is concerned. People don't like him, and he has a gender gap that has been made worse by his opposition to abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment.

The result is that the 1988 election is Michael Dukakis's to win or lose. And so far he shows no sign of losing it. He is avoiding the identification with "special interests" that won Walter Mondale 91 percent of the black vote, 57 percent of the union family vote, and 64 percent of the voters with a grade school education but lost him 49 out of 50 states. "This election isn't about ideology; it's about competence." Dukakis has said. In a society in which every ten-year-old knows how to use a computer, Dukakis is speaking the right code words for 1988. Competence means going after the irrationalities in the system and changing them without new taxes, without special quotas for minorities, without upsetting the equilibrium of an imperiled middle class (Reagan Democrats trying to make ends meet on family incomes between $25,000 and $50,000). More than a quarter century ago, John Kennedy, insisting that it was time to get the country moving again, used such a strategy to defeat Richard Nixon. Can the same kind of managerial approach turn around America in 1988? The answer is, of course, no. Only after the country has begun to trust him—if all goes well, sometime in the early 1990s—will Michael Dukakis be in a position to make fundamental change. The 1988 election is about laying the groundwork for that change. It is an election about showing that America can spend less on defense and remain secure; that a well-run Environmental Protection Agency can stop ocean dumping; that a 60-day plant closing law can buy workers the time to look for new jobs. □

Robert Leckachman

Michael Dukakis has been a liberal, a champion of fiscal responsibility and in his latest phase an enthusiastic practitioner of industrial policy, translated into cooperation between state government and corporate enterprise on terms exceedingly generous to the latter. His running mate is one of the fattest cats in the senate, no small honor. George Bush runs on the magnificent achievements of Ronald Reagan with a few grace notes of social concern for working mothers, the environment, and even acid rain. His

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running mate, a handsome nonentity of scarcely visible intellect, turns out, superhawk that he was and is, to have been a draft dodger during the Vietnam war.

If you can bear to listen to the candidates' utterances, there is little to choose between them. Bush will never raise taxes. Dukakis contemplates increases as a last resort. Both support day care. True, Dukakis also advocates more publicly assisted housing and universal health insurance, details and price tags unspecified.

Yet there are three reasons at least to vote for Dukakis instead of staying home or migrating to Canada. On foreign policy and weapons programs, Dukakis has been enlightened. His positions on abortion, school prayer, and capital punishment contrast favorably to Bush's all-out embrace of the lunatic right wing of his party. Finally, there is the Supreme Court. Bush would solidify a reactionary majority well into the next century. Dukakis' choices will reflect his own commitment to civil liberties and civil rights. So—one cool vote for the Duke. □

David Bromwich

A clever and capable man, Michael Dukakis is the kind of politician the Democrats once could produce with ease from year to year. He happens to be the first of his kind whom they have found to run for president in more than a generation. If he cannot win, it is a sign the Democrats are going the way of the Labour party in England. His management of the convention was expert, and as firm as it had to be. His acceptance speech was expert; and perhaps more carefully trite than it had to be. But Dukakis is a national politician of the true modern breed, and unlikely ever to expose himself, to an untested public, by risking a fresh thought before its time.

His campaign has two distinct appeals. The first: "Ronald Reagan's contempt for public service." That is so damaging a truth that whenever the point is raised, the opposition can be trusted simply to change the subject. Reagan has always considered public service a lower form of life than money-making; at best, it was a humble branch of money-making, whose advantage lay in the free publicity: in the end, even the people who would gladly vote him a third term came to dislike this side of his presidency; and Dukakis is reminding them that an honorable tradition, as well as the law, was being tampered with. The second appeal is equally negative and equally interesting. Dukakis has chosen not to advertise himself as a man of compassion. This, and not a "failure of rapport," was at the bottom of his troubles with Jesse Jackson. He saw that Jackson's own calls for compassion were really something else, all along; a change in the mood of protest, from justified hope to justifiable grievance. And there is this to be said against the new mood, that it offers only a solidarity of victims.

If the average, cautious, unrehearsed and self-respecting voter in recent elections has imputed a single fault to the Democrats, it is probably the fault of an unscrupulous compassion—that is to say, a readiness to frame policy as a series of replies to grievances. In this light compassion looks like pity, which, the same voter is apt to feel, in life's common relations fosters complaint, litigiousness, and finally resentment both in those who give and those who receive. This is not the true doctrine on welfare (or any other complex issue). It is, however, a widely held doctrine. And Dukakis is the first Democrat of national standing to show that he has felt its force. He shows it by a thousand reticences, and by a thousand omissions. He seems to say in return that his very prudence will have, for its longest effect, a generosity that is more durable than compassion after all. Besides, what choice do we have?—even if all he promised was a regime better informed than his rival's, and therefore less cruel. □

Fred Siegel

This is the year of the Tory tickets. All four of the men selected to run are the sons of millionaires. The fathers of three of the four were millionaires many times over. They are being generously supported by their fellow millionaires. The Democrats had so many fat cats lining up to give money at their

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Atlanta convention that according to the *Wall Street Journal* "even those who have written $100,000 checks must line up—last names A–L at one table, M–Z at another, to receive their credentials." Meanwhile the number of small donors giving money to the Democrats is down sharply. The big money breeds a comparable arrogance as in the case of a Hollywood highroller annoyed by a Cuomo speech on the problems of the Northeast. "A lot of Californians found that laughable," he said, "because on a bad day this state could buy New York and turn it into a housing development."

If voters on the presidential level are given their pick of millionaires, voters in the PAC-dominated congressional races are often denied even that choice. The problem is not merely that the vastly better-financed incumbents almost invariably win (98 percent were victorious in 1986); it is that thanks to the power of PAC money to scare away challengers there are likely to be only sixteen (out of 435) serious congressional races in 1988. The loss of competitive representation extends down to the state level where, for example, in 1986 not a single member of the California state senate or assembly was defeated for reelection.

As for the presidential election, the race between those deficit reduction twins Bush and Dukakis is likely to be decided negatively. Dukakis won the Democratic primaries by not being Jesse Jackson and he may win the presidency by not being George Bush. There are two giant statistics which stand astride the campaign. The first is that 40 percent of the American people dislike the vice-president. And the second is that despite that distaste, Dukakis has been hard pressed to go over 50 percent support in the polls. But no matter who wins, the next president will face the impossible task of dealing with a congress whose members have, like the House of Lords, the security of what is effectively an appointment for life. □

Irving Howe

I'm not quite as sanguine as some *Dissent* editors about Dukakis but when you look at the other candidate, Bush caving in to the troglodyte right and its Quayle, there isn't any choice but Dukakis. He isn't going to set liberal hearts on fire, he isn't even going to use that dreadful word; but if he is elected, there will at least be an arena for political struggle *within or near his administration* in which unions, blacks, women can press for necessary steps.

The Quayle issue is important. It's not a matter of patriotism; it's a *class* issue. Sons of the rich, including those who later became red-hots for defense, found ways of not going to Vietnam; poor folks, especially poor blacks, had to do the fighting.

It's true that both parties peddle a lot of pap; that neither candidate sufficiently engages with the problems Nick Mills talks about in this symposium. But what should be decisive for people like us is a simple test: what kinds of socio-economic groups and which trends of opinion are supporting Bush and which are supporting Dukakis? The division is clear and blunt: those who want to cripple or hold back the welfare state and continue cold war rhetoric, and those who, however timidly, see a need for some social reform and a turn to detente.

Last but hardly least: An election outcome assuring the return of Elliot Abrams to private life would have a cheerful ring, wouldn't it? □

Joanne Barkan

I was embarrassed at first to admit how good I felt about the Democratic party convention; then I realized that the four evenings I spent in front of the tv were a training period—like an athlete's spring training for a new season. But in this case, winter had lasted eight years.

Watching the tv, I exercised parts of me that hadn't been budged since 1980: I listened to politicians speak words I wanted to hear; I felt moved; I felt hopeful; and I liked a lot of the images on screen.

I liked seeing all the women and minority delegates. Sure, the tv producers packaged what I saw, and they made a point of lingering on those nonwhite and female faces. But 49 percent of the delegates *were* women, and the minority presence *was* high.

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I liked Jesse Jackson's speech. Sure, it was the rhetoric we've come to expect, but I liked the positions he laid out, and I liked thinking of millions of black kids watching at that moment. I liked Mike Dukakis's speech, and I liked the way he delivered it. Sure, the media and his staff had pumped up expectations for a truly miserable performance, so by comparison, what he did seemed terrific. And yet Dukakis took stands on domestic policy, Central America, and South Africa that were just fine. And if he's as stubborn as everyone says, maybe he won't back down when he's pushed from the right.

I liked having the rare opportunity to witness the greater good triumph over ego as when Dukakis and Jackson compromised enough to unify the party for the campaign. Sure, the egos are still there, and the unity could fall apart at any moment. But it was a successful effort to rise above faction hostility. And finally, I liked seeing signs that a majoritarian coalition might be rebuilt. Sure, the coalition includes some distasteful partners, but if it holds together, a Dukakis presidency may enable the progressive component of the coalition to grow.

By the time this appears in *Dissent,* we're likely to be raging against the Democratic candidates and the party that produced them. But warming up in front of the tv in mid-July, I began to remember what it was like long, long ago, during the Carter years, when only *half* of what I read in the newspaper each day infuriated me. □

Emanuel Geltman

For my sins, I turned the tv on in time to hear Pat Robertson at the Republican convention. His main accusation against Dukakis was that the Governor is a member of the ACLU—the godless American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU opposes prayer in public schools, and Dukakis (as I understand him, on constitutional grounds) also opposes prayer in public schools.

I think Dukakis and his staff have to take this on as an issue. Shouldn't he ask Bush in one of their debates if he considers it a sin, perhaps a crime, to belong to the ACLU? (Come to think of it, how does Bentsen feel about it?) I know the ACLU has some Republican members, just as there surely must be some Republicans around who've had abortions.

It's not a small matter. □

Interview with Menachem Brinker

ASKING SOME HARD QUESTIONS

About the Possibilities and Risks Of an Israeli-Palestinian Peace

The following discussion, taped in the spring of 1988, was held between Menachem Brinker, an Israeli writer and activist in the peace camp, and Dissent *editors Mitchell Cohen and Irving Howe.*

Dissent: Twenty-one years after the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank, over half a year after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising, Israel finds itself in difficult political circumstances. What are its options?

Brinker: There are several theoretical options, but given the stalemate in Israeli politics, there is not much to do except go on with the status quo, although such a policy is harmful, even disastrous. Labor, together with all the groups to its left, has the support of less than 50 percent of the voters. Since almost all the Arabs voting in Israel choose the Labor party or parties to its left, it follows that only a minority of Jews, about 40 percent, favors moderate or dovish policies. For the moment, this rules out most of the options that someone like myself would favor.

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Dissent: But what are the theoretical options?

Brinker: If Labor had 60 percent of the vote, there would be several possibilities. One would be to go to an international conference and negotiate with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Another, more to my taste, would be for the Israeli government to issue a declaration of principles stating that it is holding the territories only until there is peace or negotiations for peace and that it wishes to negotiate with a representative Palestinian delegation, with no a priori conditions—which means it doesn't exclude discussion of an independent Palestinian state.

Dissent: Let's imagine that an Israeli government did present such a program. There are serious questions as to what the PLO response would be. Given the internal lineup in the PLO, its past history, its organizational imperatives, it might not be able or willing to respond in a way acceptable to even the most dovish Israelis.

Brinker: Before we discuss the possible results of the negotiations, let's discuss the feasibility of holding them at all. There are several possibilities, all more favorable to Israel than the status quo. One is that the PLO will accept the offer to negotiate the future of the territories. There's not much chance of this. The second is that the offer would cause a split within the PLO resembling the split within the Zionist movement when various partition plans were offered to it by the British. There would then be a chance that the more moderate part of the PLO, backed by the moderate Arab states—Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, perhaps Saudi Arabia—would win and enter into serious negotiations with Israel. The third possibility is that the Palestinians would value their inner unity more than the chance of getting an independent state. The PLO would then remain united on the negative formula that it will never recognize Zionist Israel and won't make peace with it. Some leaders on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip might then decide to negotiate with Israel apart from the PLO. This would be the split between Arabs in the Occupied Territories and the PLO abroad that many Israeli leaders want. If this too fails to happen it would then be legitimate for Israel, in the eyes of the world, to negotiate with Hussein. And with some European, American, and Egyptian pressure, with some hints from Palestinian leaders in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Hussein might enter into negotiations with Israel. But even if this didn't happen, Israel would still gain a lot in public opinion. It would be clear that Israel was ready for peace. And what is of the utmost importance—youth in Israel would feel much better about their country's position. Israel has nothing to lose from such an initiative—and perhaps much to gain.

Dissent: One thing it would lose is something we would like it to lose: the claim that it will hold on to the Occupied Territories indefinitely.

Brinker: But that is why it is very questionable whether a Labor government would be able to move in this way, even if it did have a majority in the Knesset. For within the Labor party there are people who wouldn't accept such a declaration of principles. The sad thing is that any rational commonsensical move that we might envisage looks all but utopian when you consider the dominant mood and actors in Israel.

Dissent: For many years the Labor party has been putting forward the Jordanian option—negotiating with Jordan or with a Jordanian-Palestinian grouping, without the PLO being formally involved. Does this still have any realistic meaning or is it something that has become pointless in view of the increased strength and self-confidence of the Palestinians? Another question: There are people who ask how Israel can even consider negotiating with the PLO as long as its charter proposes abolition of the state of Israel and as long as it practices terrorism?

Brinker: Let's start with the second question. We are in a vicious circle. Neither of the national movements involved in the conflict, Zionism or the Palestinian movement, is now ready to think of its right to self-determination in a nonexclusive way, that is, in a way that allows the others their right to self-determination. There were some moves from the PLO in the past. There were essays recommending an end to terrorist attacks and the use of political means to achieve Palestinian goals by Said Hammami, the representative of the PLO in London, fifteen years ago, and he was killed. There were declarations of this kind by Issam Sartawi and he was killed.

Dissent: Some argue that such killings seem to be evidence of the impossibility of dealing with the PLO.

Brinker: Sadat too was killed, yet Mubarak didn't step back from the peace with Israel. It will always be difficult for a Palestinian, even more than it was for Sadat, to negotiate with Israel. Yet this step will have to be taken one day or another.

Walid Khalidi, a man very close to Arafat, a professor in Beirut and at Harvard, who has been mentioned as a possible prime minister of a future Palestinian government, wrote an essay in *Foreign Affairs* called "Thinking the Unthinkable," calling for the establishment of a partially demilitarized Palestinian state. And Arafat spoke several times—in a very ambiguous way, true—about his wish to make peace and to stop the armed struggle. When

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asked if this meant recognizing Israel, he said: If I say I'm going to make peace, does it not imply that I'm ready to recognize Israel? Then, of course, we hear the opposite from Farouk Kaddoumi. Most recently (May 29, 1988), Bassam Abu Sharif, an aide of Arafat, published a statement calling for direct negotiations between the PLO and Israel, the adoption of the two-state solution, and recognition of Israel's legitimate security needs. Some leading political figures on the West Bank endorsed Abu Sharif's statement; two high PLO officials said it was only a personal opinion; Arafat has maintained silence. As with previous declarations of this kind, Abu Sharif's statement floats between public relations and politics, with no decisive endorsement or rejection coming from the highest PLO authority.

Now I would claim that we cannot know the relations of forces within the PLO, how many are willing to entertain the idea of negotiating with Zionists and how many would boycott the negotiations even if they could lead to an independent Palestinian state. We will never know until an Israeli declaration of principles is put on the table.

Dissent: The Israelis rather than the Palestinians have to take the initiative?

Brinker: Both parties should take the initiative. Since I am an Israeli, I recommend it to Israel. If I were a Palestinian, I would, like the Palestinian intellectual Elias Toma, recommend this to Arafat. There is no other way to break the vicious circle. Israel is militarily the superior power. Israel stands in no real danger from the PLO, except in this war of attrition. Israel cannot be exterminated by the PLO while the Palestinians can be exterminated by Israel. Since Israel is much more powerful than the Palestinians, Israel has nothing to lose by taking the initiative.

Dissent: Some American friends of Israel see the threat of extermination coming from the Palestinian side. The PLO charter avowedly calls for the destruction of Israel.

Brinker: Yes, the charter calls for the dismantling of the Israeli state and promises equal rights to *part* of its Jewish population. But it's not enough to declare such a thing; you must have the means to do it. And the Palestinians do not have the means. It is not in their power to destroy Israel—not even the whole Arab world can destroy Israel.

About a Jordanian option: A purely Jordanian option hasn't existed since the 1974 Rabat conference. The last time a purely Jordanian option might have existed was when Hussein offered to his parliament the initiative of creating a federation with the West Bank and Golda Meir vehemently objected. She said, "Who made you the father of the territories, and who makes you the owner of the Palestinians that live there?" Saying this she almost accepted Palestinian independence (but at the same time denied that there was a distinctive Palestinian people!). This was at a time when the Labor party had a very clear majority, the religious people were more moderate, and we had something like a center in Israeli politics, which we don't have now.

Dissent: It is difficult to imagine any Israeli government withdrawing from most of the West Bank without demilitarization of the West Bank. Even the most dovish Israeli government would have to convince its population that withdrawal would not mean a rerun of May 1967. But given the history of the PLO's war with Israel, and of the PLO's relationship with Jordan, it's hard to imagine Arafat accepting a demilitarized Palestinian state sandwiched between a militarized Israel and a militarized Jordan. That seems to render the idea of a Palestinian state implausible. If one looks at the attitude of West Bank Arabs, it also looks implausible. We know there's been a rise in strength of Jihad, the Islamic fundamentalists, as well as of rejectionist groups such as Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. This winter, in a study of public opinion in the West Bank and Gaza, only 16.9 percent of the Arabs accepted an independent West Bank-Gaza state as a solution; 49.7 percent accepted it as a possible interim solution; but 43.2 percent rejected such an interim solution in favor of continued struggle for a Palestinian state in all of Palestine. And only 8.3 percent thought that diplomacy was the preferred means of pursuing Palestinian goals. Some 20.7 percent justified placing bombs on civilian airliners; 60.5 percent if it was an El Al plane; and over a third justified the massacres in the Rome and Vienna airports in 1985. If that is where public opinion is at in the territories, the PLO leadership, even if inclined to make concessions, would have a difficult time doing so. Which puts you Israeli doves in an even more difficult position.

Brinker: I'm afraid it's true that part of the dovish Israeli left has tended to deny these difficulties. The difficulties are real. The majority of the Palestinians, if they could, would like to dismantle the state of Israel. But probably the majority of Egyptians would also like to see Israel disappear. Yet Egypt did make peace with Israel.

We're discussing an ultimate Palestinian vision, but nobody has to be afraid of this as long as Israel takes pains to remain the strongest military power in the Middle East. The question is: What would the acceptance of an interim solution mean? Most

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Palestinians still consider the establishment of Israel as a historical crime against the Palestinian people, a crime that can be undone only by the dismantling of Israel. It will take years for this mood to change, if it will ever change. But you make peace with hostile parties on the assumption that it will serve their interests to do so rather than go to war.

Dissent: So you're saying that what they'd accept as an interim solution could very well work itself out as a long range solution.

Brinker: Yes. Over a very long period of time.

Dissent: And that gradually the fantasy of destroying Israel would fade away.

Brinker: Or remain an ideological relic that does not affect actual policies.

Dissent: Just as Shamir's party still theoretically claims that Jordan is part of the land of Israel.

Brinker: In 1966, *Herut,* the daily organ of Shamir's and Begin's party, removed from its front page a map of Israel showing *both* sides of the Jordan united in an Israeli state.

Dissent: Just as the Israeli right lived with the fantasy of taking over the whole of Jordan on both banks of the river but did not act on it, so if there were peace the Palestinians might hold on to the fantasy of taking over the whole of Israel but would be incapable of doing it. In consequence the fantasy would gradually weaken.

Brinker: The Middle East is full of such fantasies. Syria, with its ideology of the Fertile Crescent, claims parts of Iraq and half of Palestine and parts of Lebanon. Officially this is still the program of the Ba'ath party in Syria, yet it does nothing to realize this fantasy. The same is true for other countries in the Middle East.

Dissent: In a general way, what would be the terms of a possible peace agreement? In the short run, realistically.

Brinker: Realistically, the bulk of the territories, 80 to 85 percent, at least, would have to be returned to the Arabs, perhaps in a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. There would be open borders among the three participants, which means that Palestinian commodities would go on trafficking to Jordan and Palestinian manpower would be able to work in Israel. Open borders—but borders! Israel can demand some corrections of the borders, especially in connection with the road between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and some of the suburbs developed around Jerusalem, while the Arab part of Jerusalem would go back to either a Palestinian-Jordanian federation or a Palestinian state. This is the minimum that would be acceptable, I think, to moderate Palestinians. And I think Israel can defend itself under such an arrangement as long as all the Arab territories west of the Jordan remain demilitarized—free of offensive weapons.

Dissent: Under such an arrangement, what would happen to the Israeli settlers on the West Bank?

Brinker: Either they would be able to stay in a Palestinian state or there would be a kind of Israeli enclave, with Israeli rule. Or they could come back to Israel.

Dissent: About demilitarization: Wouldn't the Palestinians say this is a violation or diminution of their sovereignty, which they would refuse to accept?

Brinker: It would be a diminution of sovereignty. But as I said, Walid Khalidi, who is quite close to Arafat, suggested it. Since the Arabs didn't accept the original partition plan in 1947, and then started several wars against Israel, Israel is justified in its fears and can demand demilitarization. If the Palestinians proclaim during peace negotiations that they have no offensive plans against Israel or Jordan, why then would they need tanks and planes? They would need only weapons for policing their country. At least for a generation. And then we can see. Of course, the Palestinians would rightly demand some guarantees against Israeli and Jordanian aggression and I think they should get these.

Dissent: How much does the Palestinian leadership really want to establish a Palestinian state? The uprising has gone on for months and yet there hasn't been one political statement by the PLO leadership saying that they want this or that. They simply allow the pot to boil; they don't give any indication of thinking in terms of a political resolution.

Brinker: That's the saddest thing. The Israeli writer David Grossman recently said that it seems both parties are reconciled to the idea of ongoing suffering and are more interested in finding ways for the suffering to enrich their existence rather than in minimizing the suffering. And I thought this when some of my colleagues were looking at the Palestinians as a rational liberal partner—I thought there were many in the PLO who favored things this way. Not just the rejectionists, but also others closer to the PLO mainstream—a segment of Palestinian opinion that really thinks the role the PLO is playing in the Arab world is so important they shouldn't sacrifice it for a small state depending on the goodwill of Jordan and Israel.

Dissent: When listening to you, it's hard to avoid a certain pessimism. If at least half the Israeli Jewish population has its version of rejectionism and insists on its God-given right to control the West Bank and

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there are equivalent groupings on the Arab side that don't want or are very skeptical of a compromise, then it's hard not to foresee something like Northern Ireland: continuous small-scale struggle, no peace, and terrible consequences.

Brinker: And much worse. Because I really think that the idea of "transfer"—forcing part of the Arab population under Israeli rule to emigrate to other Arab countries—is becoming more and more acceptable to the political right, and not just the extreme right, in Israel. We know that Israeli youth are polarized about the issue: some of them hesitate whether to vote for the radical right or the radical left. They know that the status quo cannot go on. They want a radical solution, but they can't make up their minds whether the radical solution should be an independent Palestinian state or "transfer"! This is very symptomatic. This curious phenomenon emerged even before the uprising and was intensified during it. We all hope that such fluidity in public opinion (especially among the young) will result in moderation. But this is not certain.

Dissent: Is it conceivable that given the traditions of Labor Zionism—to say nothing of the reactions of the world, to which Israel does have to pay some attention—that there could be a large-scale forced expulsion of Arabs from the West Bank or Israel itself?

Brinker: It is highly conceivable. Humans have no brakes. People are free and very often mad in their freedom. There are no constraints to what may happen in history. No a priori constraints. We've seen whole populations in the twentieth century going mad and joining suicidal politics, enthusiastically.

If the uprising continues for a year or two and people keep being killed, a probable reaction within Israel would be to favor a kind of "transfer." It does not even have to follow a political decision of the government. The Israeli army, pursuing terrorists, could shoot so many people and frighten so many others that people would pack their things and cross the border. I don't say this has to take place, but I really think it is possible. In Lebanon the Israeli army did exactly this kind of thing. More than two hundred and fifty thousand people moved. Most of them came back after Israel evacuated Lebanon. So why can't it be done in Palestine?

Dissent: If this is the danger on the horizon and if the stakes are now that great—the stakes being the future of Israel as a humane society, in which Israelis like you will feel comfortable and to which Jews in the diaspora will feel committed—doesn't this mean that many of the previous restraints on diaspora Jews, in terms of either criticism of Israel or open partisanship of various forces within Israel, must now be cast aside?

Brinker: I agree completely, though you must concede that Jewish opinion in the diaspora is split as much as in Israel.

Dissent: But the way it is now, only those who support the doves and the left are really told, within the Jewish community, to shut up.

Brinker: Of course. I expect not only Jews, but gentiles of good will to join in the debate and to show as much concern for the democratic and humanistic character of Israel as they've shown about other problems in the world.

Dissent: What demands should such friends make of the PLO?

Brinker: To recognize Israel, to stop terrorism, to declare its willingness to negotiate with Israel, and to accept even if only de facto the existence of Israel as a Zionist state, a state in which most of its citizens are Jews.

Dissent: The fear of many friends of Israel is that it's more likely pressure would be put on Israel.

Brinker: At least in the West there is not much danger of one-sided pressure on Israel. Prime Minister Thatcher refused to meet with PLO representatives because they stepped back from their willingness to declare that the PLO would ultimately recognize Israel. The same holds true of Mitterrand, the Germans, and the Americans. So I don't think friends of Israel should be dissuaded from criticizing the policies of its government. Of course, these critics should make it clear that at the same time they demand equal pressure on the Palestinians.

Let me conclude with something else. The tragic situation of Israel can be described as a gap between the decisions it will have to make in the short run and the feasibility of changing the cultural aspirations of Israeli youth through a long process of education. Democracy, pluralism, liberalism, are not strongly entrenched values for the majority of Israelis. And this is so partly because of the Israeli educational system. About a quarter of Israeli youth are exempt from learning anything about Western culture, democracy, liberalism, the French revolution, the rights of man, etc., because in their religious schools they learn the Bible, the Talmud, and the technological sciences. Many Israelis jump immediately from a biblical inspiration to contemporary politics. And they hope for a political leader who resembles King David rather than David Ben Gurion. It's very difficult to reach this quarter of the Israeli population. The right has a great advantage in reaching these people when it creates an atmosphere

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of siege, when it raises paranoiac fears, when it calls for "national unity." This language is understood. When a Labor leader—not to mention a leader of movements to the left of Labor—speaks to these people about the values of a pluralist, open, democratic society, he is simply not understood. Not that people object to him—they don't understand what he's talking about.

The educational system in Israel started improving a bit with the efforts of Yitzhak Navon, the current education minister. Classes on democracy and pluralism and parliamentary systems are offered now. This has been especially emphasized in the army, where the value of democracy is taught much more than in any civilian Israeli institution. In the long run, I am sure that the majority of Israelis will become more favorable to the values of liberalism and democracy, and more sensitive to the universalistic and humanist aspects of the Jewish tradition; but this may take too long for the atmosphere of compromise and reconciliation we will need if the worst is to be avoided.

Politics is, above all, a matter of timing. We are in a desperate race in Israel to develop a foreign policy oriented toward peace, before it is too late—before the other side is swept away by a tide of fundamentalist fanaticism that would make talk of compromise all but meaningless. We are in a desperate race to preserve the democratic norms integral to the founding of Israel but which now are threatened within Israel. For us the moment has never been more grave. □

Irving Howe

THE EARTH STILL TURNS

And the World Still Changes

Tremendously important changes are taking place in the world today, so rapidly it often seems impossible to keep track.

The great powers are starting to back away from their military interventions, not because they have concluded that lions should lie down with lambs but because they are discovering that military interventions just don't work in the twentieth century. The Soviet Union has started to pull its troops out of Afghanistan and has signaled the Sandinistas that it wants to limit its involvement in Nicaragua. The United States, despite Reagan's huffing and Elliot Abrams's responsive puffing, is shying away from intervention in Nicaragua. It begins to seem that the era of bipolar domination in the world may be approaching an end.

Still more remarkable are the changes within the Soviet Union itself. Each day brings fresh reports of articles in Soviet papers revealing further facts about the horrors of Stalinism. Old Bolsheviks slaughtered by Stalin are "rehabilitated." Once forbidden topics, like the possible connection between Leninist doctrine and Stalinist deed, are now treated—gingerly, so far—in Soviet periodicals. And each day brings fresh reports of initiatives by independent political groups in major Russian cities, sometimes tolerated and sometimes suppressed—though even when suppressed, in ways that seem mild if compared to the past.

If the *glasnost* policy continues, there will surely be major changes not only in Soviet political life but its culture as well. It's as if a people is emerging from a dungeon, blinking in the light. Unless the clamps are reinstated, there will reappear strands of Russian literature and thought not always to our taste, for example, the tradition of mysticism traditionally strong in Russia. For it appears that totalitarianism never quite destroys anything in the country it holds down; it only suppresses. We should be sufficiently principled democrats—I think we are—to welcome every authentic and decent Russian voice now starting to declare itself, whether or not we agree with it. We want freedom for our political friends, like the young people in Moscow now forming independent political groups apart from or in opposition to the Communist party; we also want freedom for those with whom we will disagree.

There are skeptics. East European dissidents have been burned too often. Some anti-Stalinist leftists, like some ideological conservatives, may be reluc-

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tant to give up or modify their theories about the nature of Communism. That's not so terrible, just as long as they recognize that extraordinary changes, whatever their eventual significance, *are* occurring in the Soviet Union.

Such changes can be unsettling, especially to people with large investments in theories: totalitarianism, bureaucratic collectivism, state capitalism, what you will. It's only natural—none of us is exempt from this inclination—to cling to one's "positions" even as events may be complicating or undermining them. Perhaps the "positions" will finally be vindicated, at least in part. But right now what's needed is openness, responsiveness, receptivity to surprise. Let the theories rest a while, and later we can see whether they still hold.

That power in the Soviet Union remains in the hands of a one-party dictatorship; that Gorbachev is not a liberal or a democrat; that the current loosening up is still far from genuine democracy; that we don't know how long Gorbachev will stay in power; that strong elements in the party-state bureaucracy will do their best to thwart *perestroika*—all true.

Nor is there much difficulty in foreseeing major problems for the Gorbachev regime:

- The limited rights granted under *glasnost* must in time lead to demands for a genuine pluralism, that is, a multi-party system with a bill of rights, which a major portion of the Communist bureaucracy will bitterly oppose.
- National and ethnic communities in the Soviet Union that have been mistreated are starting to speak out, with the Armenians and Estonians in the lead. The Gorbachev leadership, and probably a significant portion of the population, will regard these as threats to the unity of the state. The famous "national question" will plague Gorbachev, as it has plagued his predecessors and will plague his successors.
- The economic reforms of *perestroika* must necessarily proceed more slowly than the political reforms of *glasnost,* and this may well create disillusionment within and evoke resistance from both the political-managerial bureaucracy and the working class. The whole *perestroika* venture might even collapse—too late, or too little too late.

Still, to make such estimates into the sole or even dominant response to the events in the Soviet Union seems to me a failure of imagination. What is crucial, absolutely crucial, is that in a society of blood and muteness there has begun to appear ferment, speech, discussion. Limited, yes; but real. History, despite the grim forebodings of the 1950s, does not stand still. Change comes. A little bit of freedom can be a dangerous, that is, a wonderful thing. We may anticipate that in time the dynamic of events will move beyond what Gorbachev and his allies want. That hope for a deepening democratization is a major reason for responding with excitement to what is now happening in the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, on a world scale, the entire Communist movement has entered a deep, perhaps final crisis. If the Soviet regime is in turmoil, the Communist parties are in decay. All the talk about "the wave of the future" and "captive minds" now seems obsolete. What a remarkable difference from the way Europe looked only a few decades ago!

So there is reason to look forward to the 1990s as a time of at least moderate progress in the "advanced" countries, a time when there will be fresh social and intellectual energies in both Eastern and, by ricochet, Western Europe. It's rather good to be alive. □

COMING IN *DISSENT*

- David Brody on Unions in America
- Peter Mandler on the "Double Life" in Academia
- Todd Gitlin on Post-Modernism
- Joanne Barkan on Marketing Children's Literature

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Tony Judt

THE MITTERRAND TRANSITION

The French Fifth Republic is thirty years old. Its founder and first president, Charles de Gaulle, designed its constitution to achieve two overriding goals: to secure political stability by concentrating power in the hands of a strong presidency, and to exclude the left from political control. In the first he was eminently successful: the directly elected president supervises all areas of public life, either through his own office or through the prime minister whom he appoints. In the second his legacy endured through 1981—until that year all governmental and parliamentary offices were exclusively in the hands of the right.

But in 1981 François Mitterrand, the candidate of the Socialist left, was narrowly elected to the presidency, defeating the incumbent Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Using the momentum of his surprise victory, Mitterrand dissolved parliament, and in the ensuing elections his Socialist party won a majority of the seats in the National Assembly. Mitterrand appointed a Socialist prime minister, and a coalition government of Socialists and Communists held office until 1984, when Mitterrand replaced his first prime minister, Pierre Mauroy (an old-line Socialist with strong labor backing) with a "technocratic" young Socialist, Laurent Fabius. This was correctly taken to symbolize a shift from "doctrinal" to "pragmatic" Socialist policies and the four Communist ministers duly resigned. Fabius made no bones about abandoning the former government's emphasis on state control of the economy and radical social reforms, adopting instead the fashionable rhetoric of "modernization," but the Socialist administration continued to do badly in the polls, held responsible for high unemployment and the inevitable disappointment that followed the high hopes of 1981. In the legislative elections of 1986, a coalition of right and center groupings regained control of the assembly.

The Socialists' defeat was cushioned by the system of proportional representation, introduced by Mitterrand precisely to limit the likely electoral damage. As a result of the new rules, the Socialists did better than expected and the Communists were all but wiped out, while the far-right National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen secured parliamentary representation for the first time. Mitterrand's own position as president was unaffected—presidential elections are scheduled every seven years, whereas the assembly has a maximum life of five years—but he had to accept "cohabitation" with the leader of the Gaullist party, Jacques Chirac, who duly received appointment as prime minister.

This was an unprecedented situation. No allowance is made in the constitution for the presence in office of a president lacking a parliamentary majority, and for two years Mitterrand and Chirac jockeyed for power. But from the start the real prize was not policy-making but control of the presidency at the expiration of Mitterrand's mandate. Two concerns focused the attention of political observers: would Mitterrand run again (he is in his seventies), and how would Le Pen fare, in a France now so obsessed with the "immigrant problem" that even some Socialists were offering hard-line solutions to hold the white vote.

Mitterrand ran and won. His share of the vote in the first round on April 24 was 38 percent, respectable but nowhere near enough to ensure outright victory. The official Communist candidate got just under 11 percent of the vote, while the two conservative candidates, Chirac and the former prime minister Raymond Barre, got less than 34 percent between them. The shocking news was Le Pen's success in mobilizing 14 percent of the vote behind his xenophobic, populist, neoracist message. The second round was a foregone conclusion, despite desperate measures by Chirac, the candidate of the right and still the prime minister, including a hostages-for-arms deal with Iran and a shoot-out with Kanak separatists in the South Pacific. In addition to the votes of the left, Mitterrand benefited from some of Le Pen's voters' dislike of the "official" right, and he defeated Chirac by a margin of 55 percent to 45 percent, a landslide in French electoral terms.

In one sense, Mitterrand then proceeded to repeat his strategy of 1981. He appointed a Socialist prime Minister (Michel Rocard) and dissolved the assembly. But here history failed to repeat; in order to capture the votes of the center, the Socialist party entered the contest with its identity and its program firmly muffled. The purpose of this was to avoid the

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charge of a return to the heady "revolutionary" dreams of 1981, which would, it was feared, alienate an electorate which had been content with the cohabitation of the past two years. Mitterrand also hoped that the PS would seem the natural party of refuge for hesitant centrists horrified at the rise of the National Front and the willingness of conservative leaders to acknowledge the legitimacy of its hectoring propaganda of hatred.

But the result of this, with the Socialists avoiding the very word "socialism" and presenting their candidates as "the supporters of the president," was to numb much of the electorate into boredom. Between a left intent on denying its inheritance and a right divided between pygmies and bigots, many electors turned their backs on the whole affair. At the first round of the legislative elections, on June 5, only 65 percent of the electorate turned out to vote, in contrast to the usually high level of voting in France (in the two rounds of the presidential election six weeks earlier, the turnout had been 82 percent and 85 percent, which was about the norm). The elections were run on the old system of single member majority voting (one of the first acts of Chirac's majority in 1986 had been to restore this system at the expense of Mitterrand's proportional method), and the results were monumentally indecisive. The Socialists secured 35 percent of the vote, the coalition of right and center parties 38 percent, the Communists just over 11 percent and the candidates of the National Front 9.7 percent.

At this point the Socialists began to panic, since they could no longer count on a majority of the assembly once the runoffs were completed the following week. Until then, the PS, like Mitterrand, had been superbly confident of success, so much so that both Mitterrand and Rocard had given speeches warning of the dangers of single-party domination! Now, with a week between rounds, they worked feverishly to get out the vote. In this they were mildly successful. At the second round of the legislative elections the turnout improved a little (to 70 percent, still very low), and the Socialists won a clear plurality of seats.

But not a majority. The Socialists have 262 seats in an assembly of 575. With the Communists (27 seats) and their allies on the left-center, they can muster 302 votes. But since it has been Mitterrand's singular achievement to render the Socialists independent of the declining Communist party, Rocard (not in any case much of a favorite in Communist circles) has presented a new cabinet where Socialists constitute just fifty percent of the members, the rest of the places going to independents and other figures from the political center.

No one yet knows what the new Rocard government will achieve, nor even what it wants to attempt. The only stated policy to date, building a parliamentary and national coalition around the Socialists and thus laying the ground for an enduring left-center majority, is far from certain to succeed. But some things are clear. The National Front is not about to seize control of French politics, as some feared in the aftermath of Le Pen's dramatic success in the presidential elections (where he was within two percentage points of the established, respectable Barre). It was only able to elect one candidate to the assembly, a victim of declining support and an electoral system that massively disadvantages small or extremist parties. The National Front still has wide backing, especially in eastern and southern France (and everywhere that African or Arab minorities have settled), but at this point it is too dependent on the charisma of its leader to succeed in the parliamentary electoral system. Le Pen still has hopes for next year's local elections, however, and he has a small but real chance of being elected mayor of Marseilles.

The Communists, on the other hand, did better than their presidential candidate André Lajoinie had managed. But Communist presidential candidates always do worse than their local representatives, as a result of the party's special strength in local and inner-city politics, and anyway the improvement was small. Had it not been for the low turnout in June, which magnified the presence of the loyal Communist voters, the party would have been seen to be, as it clearly is, in precipitate decline, supported only in its heartlands of central and northern France and content to get 10 percent of the vote where once it could expect close to a third of the vote in some districts.

Once again, the Socialists have come out best. For the second time in a decade, the party has won both presidential and assembly elections, and is on its way to becoming the natural party of government in France. Mitterrand, the Fourth Republic politician who condemned de Gaulle's constitution as tantamount to a "permanent coup d'état," has manipulated his predecessor's institutions brilliantly. He has marginalized the Communists, divided his opponents and assisted into the limelight a Socialist party that is now social democratic in all but name. And by illustrating in his own person the proposition that Socialists could take power in de Gaulle's Republic without provoking institutional chaos, he has laid the groundwork for political stability in the country (which was a major subliminal theme in his electoral campaign and undoubtedly contributed to its success). The one thing Mitterrand has so far failed to

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do is give a new direction to his movement, which has abandoned marxism and the myth of the *grand soir*, but has yet to replace them with anything much beyond good intentions and the rhetoric of social justice. But then Mitterrand was always more of a political artist than a thinker. His historic achievement will have been the transformation of the non-Communist left into a party and a movement capable of winning elections and securing office. It will fall upon others, perhaps starting with Michel Rocard himself, to work out what they wish to do with their new-found strength. □

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Democratic Socialists of America

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Mayday 1986 in San Salvador (Adam Kufeld/IMPACT VISUALS)

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Charles Lane

LETTER FROM EL SALVADOR

Trials of the Democratic Left

Inside a small and somewhat shabby little office building in a rundown part of San Salvador, a group of activists is beginning a political experiment that may shape the course of events in Central America for years to come. The group is called the Democratic Convergence, and its most active and articulate leader, Ruben Zamora, is a democratic socialist who fled El Salvador after a rightist death squad brutally murdered his brother Mario in 1980. Having returned along with other leftist democrats in November 1987, Zamora is now embarked on the risky and complicated task of organizing a popular, democratic, civil movement. It is an effort whose next step will be participation in El Salvador's presidential elections next March. Right now, the Convergence's headquarters is a political beehive, with phones ringing, carpenters hammering, and rank-and-file workers jostling for position with foreign reporters eager to take a look at what's going on. Mindful of the risks of what he is attempting, Zamora never goes anywhere alone, and wears a bullet-proof vest wherever he goes. But he is obviously enjoying the challenge, too. "I feel like a reborn politician," he says. "After seven years of doing international work I have gone back to my basic vocation."

The reason Zamora's job is risky is that throughout El Salvador's history, democrats of the left have been lumped together with Communism by the (usually military) authorities, and repressed accordingly. The most recent such official rampage took place in the early 1980s, when thousands of people were killed by the army, police, and right-wing death squads. In fact, the Democratic Convergence is a kind of incipient reconstruction of the broad sector of leftist politicians, unionists, professionals, and intellectuals that was smashed by that reign of terror. Its main component is the exiled remnant of that sector, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), which itself is a coalition made up of Zamora's Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC) and the National Revolutionary Movement of Guillermo Ungo. (The third party in the Convergence is the tiny Social Democratic party.) The FDR is not very large; since 1980, the group has drawn most of its political muscle from its alliance with the Marxist guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). Though the FDR has accompanied the FMLN in peace talks with the government and represented the guerrillas' point of view abroad, it is very much the junior partner in the alliance.

And it is largely that alliance with the FMLN which accounts for the symbolic importance of the democratic left's return. Zamora and Ungo, as well as many of their colleagues in the Convergence, were once allies of President Jose Napoleon Duarte, who has governed El Salvador in collaboration with the armed forces for the last four years. Yet in the harshly polarized environment of insurgency and repression that prevailed in 1980, Zamora and Ungo felt their only political—and physical—security lay in a pact with the guerrillas. Salvadorans often say that Duarte chose his army, and the FDR leaders chose theirs. Yet from the point of view of democracy, that hasn't solved anything. Just about everyone in El Salvador from the U.S. Ambassador on over will tell you that there can be no lasting democracy in the country without a secure space for the unarmed left to participate—the question is how, and on what terms. What Zamora and Ungo are doing now is trying to see if such a space can be opened and sustained, if not exactly on their terms, at least on terms they can live with. If they succeed, it would mean a great step in the direction of democracy and peace in El Salvador and the region as a whole. If they fail, it could have the opposite effect.

The FDR has returned to an El Salvador that is greatly changed from the one it left. Indeed, a principal reason that it makes sense now to try to establish space for the civilian left is that much space

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has already been opened. The U.S. has forced changes on the army and security forces, making it clear that gross misbehavior will cost the military its U.S. aid, and drumming home the lesson that killing innocent people is not a good way to win hearts and minds. It is important to be clear about what this change means: Duarte and the U.S. never got rid of the impunity that rightists and military men still enjoy—no senior officer has ever been put on trial for the thousands of killings in the early 1980s. Death squad killings still happen, and have indeed increased during 1988. Still, such abuses occur at nowhere near the levels of 1980, when 800 bodies per month used to appear on streets and country roads all over El Salvador. And the FDR leaders themselves now believe that their very prominence makes the political cost of killing them higher than the army and the right can afford. Meanwhile, Zamora appears frequently on television and radio, sometimes in debate with figures of the far right. As an editorial in the influential leftist weekly *Proceso* recently summed up the situation: "Despite the fragility and ambiguity which characterize the traditional participants in the democratic process, the fact that space seems to have been opened to the political work of the left constitutes a truly positive sign which must not be underestimated."

So there is space, and there is opportunity. Opportunity because Duarte is in political eclipse. Since his election in 1984, Duarte has personified the U.S. effort to build a democratic center in El Salvador. Yet well before his terminal cancer was revealed in May, it was clear that the president could neither reactivate the economy nor negotiate an end to the war which has dragged on for over eight years and, along with related political violence, claimed over 65,000 lives. Though his popularity was still intact on Capitol Hill, where his centrist image assured support for military and economic aid from conservatives and liberals alike, Duarte grew increasingly unpopular at home. This was confirmed last March, when the right-wing ARENA party swept municipal and legislative elections. That threw the Christian Democrats into a fratricidal internal dispute; Duarte himself has been powerless to control the catfight and it is unlikely that the party will recover sufficiently to wage a strong campaign for president next year. The result has been a near power vacuum which reflects a broader state of growing public apathy and disaffection. Indeed, while ARENA won the most votes, the fastest-growing group of voters appears to be those who don't cast a ballot at all.

And finally, there is necessity. Necessity because the guerrillas, who seemed at the brink of military victory in the early 1980s, no longer seem to have the same prospects that they did when the FDR formed its alliance with them back in 1980. In January 1981 and again in 1983, guerrilla offensives pushed the army to the wall. But that was before the arrival of dozens of U.S. advisers, helicopters, and hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid. The guerrillas were obliged to break up into small groups and take to the hills, from whence they have concentrated mainly on a steady campaign of sabotage and harassment.

While this has ensured their apparently indefinite survival as a fighting force, it has not helped them translate military power into political appeal beyond their hard core. Many of the guerrillas' recent attempts to expand their political base have backfired. Since 1986, when the guerrillas first succeeded in reactivating pro-FMLN unions and student groups in San Salvador, they have repeatedly used strikes, marches, and vandalism to destabilize the capital and stimulate a climate of popular insurrection. But the very radicalism of the guerrilla message and violence of its allied groups' methods have alienated potential supporters. To name one example, the Salvadoran Workers' Central (CTS) pulled out of the National Salvadoran Workers Union (UNTS) federation a year ago; its leaders cited FMLN "manipulation" of the UNTS. Says one FDR official of the FMLN's tactics: "They think the people will understand because it comes from them. But that's not true anymore." Transport stoppages and blackouts the FMLN sees as necessary to weaken the "economy of war" make life difficult for ordinary people and turn them against the FMLN. In other words, guerrilla actions themselves would appear to be one factor contributing to the country's political anomie.

The FDR clearly feels that continuing on this course carries the risk of political isolation, both for the Marxist left and for itself. To the FDR, survival means moderating tactics and taking a chance on expanding the space available to political work. As Zamora put it when he announced his intention to return last September: "A lot of people have nowhere to go. They don't like Duarte and they're afraid of the FMLN. The fundamental job of our party would be to serve those people."

But the FDR insists that this does not mean a breaking of the alliance, and that is where its work starts getting complicated. The U.S. and Salvadoran governments have been seeking such a split for years as a legitimation of the democratic process they have built in El Salvador—and a delegitimation of the

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FMLN's armed struggle. Although both the U.S. Embassy and the government initially sounded hostile about the possibility of the FDR's returning without first formally renouncing the FMLN, a more pragmatic and patient view has prevailed since then—a view that was perhaps best summed up by Salvadoran Army Colonel Rene Emilio Ponce in a recent conversation with a group of foreign reporters. "I don't like it," he said of Zamora and Ungo's presence in the country. "But we have to accept it, because it's in the political interest of the country. It's well to analyze what is more in our interest, to have them outside discrediting the country and mobilizing external support or have them here inside participating politically within the democratic process? The second is better. They may break with the FMLN at some point, and you can already feel that coming, a formal break with the FMLN. And if that happens, for us it would be the greatest thing."

The FDR has so far adamantly refused to present such a "gift" to the U.S. and its Salvadoran allies. Far from renouncing the guerrillas, the FDR says its task is to expand the available political space and use it to help the left—FMLN included—gain a say in how power will eventually be distributed in El Salvador. It is up to the civilian left to organize social forces in favor of a national consensus and a negotiated settlement to the war. The FDR says this would be an alternative both to more years of U.S.-backed counterinsurgency and to the sterile insurrectionist dreams of the guerrillas.

Eventually, however, objections to this proposal may come not only from the U.S. and the Salvadoran authorities, but also from the hard left itself. The FMLN is an alliance of five groups, the two most powerful of which are the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), and the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL). The ERP is a military-oriented group which is believed to be responsible for most of the guerrillas' recent drift toward terror tactics such as planting car bombs and assassinating mayors in guerrilla-dominated areas. Its leader, Joaquin Villalobos, is regarded as the guerrillas' most powerful comandante. The FPL, which has sought far more than the ERP to match its military wing with a political presence among the population, is seen as the force behind the recent attempts to re-enter the cities. At the moment, the two groups and the FDR seem to be in a three-way debate over how to respond tactically to the government's disarray: to push hard for a military insurrection, or to emphasize negotiations, political work, and other efforts at moderation to rebuild popular appeal.

By going back to El Salvador, the FDR is trying to show its senior partners that moderation can work—that a political approach of the kind which the FPL has sometimes favored offers the best long-term hope. Indeed, FDR leaders frequently describe their return to the country as a kind of demonstration project for the benefit of the FMLN. But since it is still very much the junior partner in the alliance, the FDR also sees its organizational efforts as a way to accumulate a social base of its own. That social base would then give the FDR "counterweight" to the FMLN in making alliance decisions. Sometimes FDR activists have compared themselves to a grown-up son who is, for the first time, trying to convince his father to do things his way.

So far the results have been mixed. Efforts to accumulate a broader base for the FDR have succeeded in bringing some groups, such as the CTS union, to the Democratic Convergence banner, and in establishing an initial presence in areas outside the capital. But the Convergence remains small and little known outside San Salvador. And many Salvadorans are still afraid to associate openly with any leftist group. These factors have combined to hamper the FDR's efforts on the electoral front, too. For the three Convergence parties to run a joint candidate next year, all must be legally "inscribed" with the electoral commission. Ungo's MNR and the PSD are inscribed; but it took two months for Zamora's MPSC to get the 3,000 signatures it needs. Those names are now being verified by the Central Elections Commission. Meanwhile, as the election gets closer, the alliance is arguing over who should top the ticket, Ungo or Zamora. Zamora is generally regarded as the stronger candidate, but Ungo has connections to the Socialist International and the financial support that would bring. "It won't be easy to work up our people's enthusiasm for Ungo," says one MPSC leader.

For its part, the FMLN initially reacted by supporting the group in public statements but privately expressing doubts. More important are the guerrillas' actions. Twice, the FMLN has broken what the FDR thought were agreements to cool its violent tactics—once in launching a violent boycott of the March elections and again on May Day, when pro-FMLN demonstrators erupted into vandalism at a rally attended by both UNTS and CTS contingents, at which Zamora was a featured speaker. More recent demonstrations by pro-guerrilla groups have been more controlled, however.

Elections are the critical issue. For the FMLN, it has been an article of revolutionary faith that elections are a fraudulent part of the American

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counterinsurgency plan. Since the FDR is participating in elections, this seems to indicate that it has managed to persuade the FMLN that elections at the present time can also serve revolutionary interests. To participate without some kind of nod from the FMLN would seem to place the very alliance itself in question.

At a meeting in July in Managua, Villalobos himself recommended that the FDR participate. "He said 'you keep doing your thing and I'll keep doing mine,' " says an FDR source. "If things go the way we think, three months from now the FMLN will be moving more toward political solutions." Others are still skeptical. "Whatever happens, it's good for Villalobos," says a non-American diplomat who keeps in close touch with leftist leaders. "If they get killed it shows there's no hope within the system. If they don't get killed, they can bring people into the street, where he can use them. . . . That's why I don't think the FDR should be so happy."

Meanwhile, the FDR must also look over its right shoulder. ARENA is on the rise politically. Not only did the rightist party, founded by reputed death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson, win the March elections. It is also heavily favored to win the presidency next year. For now, ARENA is on good behavior, projecting a moderate image and even engaging in frequent and cordial meetings with FDR representatives. But it too is divided, between a faction for which moderation and adherence to democratic norms are real commitments, and another for which those things are necessary evils adopted for the sake of winning next year. It is far from clear which faction will gain the upper hand, or how even a moderate ARENA would behave in power. The party's leaders have spoken on many occasions of a need for "total war" against the guerrillas, which to many Salvadorans sounds disquietingly like a return to open season on leftists of any stripe. And despite the friendly chats between ARENA and the FDR, ARENA has also made it clear that the FDR must eventually fish or cut bait on the alliance with the FMLN—a position that probably enjoys wide sympathy within a military that is still deeply suspicious of the democratic left's intentions. Recently Air Force helicopters were seen dropping leaflets on working-class neighborhoods; the leaflets carried pictures of "the butchers of the people," Ungo, Zamora, and Villalobos. A senior military commander later told me that the leaflets "could be" part of a military psychological operations campaign. Air Force commander General Rafael Bustillo followed that up with a sharply worded letter to the MPSC telling them that they were free to act politically, as long as they avoided "direct or indirect" support for the FMLN—which General Bustillo reserved the right to define. □

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Glasnost Watch

Daniel Bell

TO THE OTHER SHORE

A Visit to the Soviet Union

We are pleased to print below two excerpts from a journal that Daniel Bell wrote after his trip to the Soviet Union last spring. The first excerpt describes a lecture he gave at the Leningrad State University.—EDS.

In the afternoon, we set out for Leningrad State University. I had been scheduled to speak to the faculty and staff of the schools of social sciences, but when some posters had gone up advertising the talk, graduate students and research students had clamored to be invited and the talk had been moved to a larger hall to accommodate the audience. The building itself, as we approached it, displayed a long, imposing façade with hundreds of windows in serried rank on each level. It had been, I was told, the major government ministry building initiated by Peter, and was for many years the largest administrative building in Russia. . . .

The doors were opened, the crowd made way, and we entered, followed by the throng. It was a muted, rectangular room, its walls of plaster with wood panels, stucco, and some faded gold paint breaking up the space at intervals. At the end of the room was a raised platform that was bare but looked as if a piano could have stood there if a recital were being given. There was no lectern and apparently Anne, the young lady who was to translate, and I were simply expected to stand there and talk. The room quickly filled up and there were, I would guess, between 250 and 300 persons present. . . .

As I spoke, I stopped after each short phrase and Anne translated fluently. As I continued, my voice became steadier, more resonant, and quickly a sing-song rhythm developed between us and the waves of sound lapped out over the hushed audience, in a duet, baritone and soprano, strophe and antistrophe, a rising and falling steady beat. As I spoke (and experienced teachers have had that feeling), I sensed the audience beginning to move with the rhythm, swaying in their seats, so that I felt that while I was speaking I was seeing a Russian wheat field, golden in the sun, the light streaming in from the windows at the left, the stalks swaying gently in the wind. The audience became more and more hushed and I felt that our two voices were chanting some folk or religious melody. At times one could feel sighs emerging from the audience, as if a common release of breath had merged into a wave that moved back towards us, as our voices rose and fell in the slow steady *singspiel*.

What did I speak about? Frankly, I do not recall, at least not consciously. I, too, had been caught up in that rhythm and the sense of communion that had gripped the audience, and I spoke almost as if I had been praying in some synagogue *stetl*, where my grandfather, the *melamid* after whom I had been named, had been leading the Hallel in a responsive chant.

We finished, and there was a long hush. No one moved. There were not even murmurs or

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the usual shifting of weight in the seats. Just a hush. The young woman looked at me with a composed smile. We both stood quietly, almost holding hands.

To break the silence, I said what I have sometimes said on finishing speaking as awkward silence had developed (but this time there was no awkwardness): "I feel now like the Rabbi after a lesson; I have an answer; who has a question?" Laughter broke out in the room and suddenly there was an excited buzz of noise as people began talking to their neighbors and grinning at my statement.

A man spoke out. He seemed to be in his early thirties and spoke, as I sensed it, rather awkwardly. "You have talked," he said, "about technology and the way it has changed our world. But as we look about and see the destruction that technology has created, would it not be better if we had left it as God had given us?" It was, I thought, the most unexpected and astonishing statement, and question. Moreover, no one laughed or hooted. Some people frowned or looked embarrassed, but the audience turned expectantly to my answer. Did I have an answer to *that* question?

I began by saying that we do not know what God intended of us, though religious teachings counseled love and charity (I deliberately used the Hebrew word *tzdukkah*). But if we looked not at God but at nature, it was clear that, left to our own strengths, man could not easily survive in the world. I remarked that the Greek poet Hesiod (in the story repeated later in the play by Sophocles) had told the tale of two brothers, Prometheus and Epimetheus. At this point the translator, for the first time, faltered at the second name, and from at least three or four persons in the audience the name Epimetheus was given to her. Clearly a portion of the audience had a classical education. I pointed out that in the poem Epimetheus had been given the task of equipping all species for living in the world. Some were given fleetness, others strength; those who were weak had been given fertility, and others cunning; but when the time had come for man to emerge in the world, Epimetheus had squandered his bag of attributes and man, unshod and unarmed, stood helpless before nature. Prometheus, I pointed out, not only stole fire from the Gods, but his name meant foresight, and without foresight, we would be helpless.

There were other, more prosaic questions about technology, and then someone asked, did not foresight mean planning, and in that respect what did I think of *perestroika?* Again, what was the answer? I was not giving a technical talk, nor, I felt, did the audience want a technical response. Something deeper was driving the current of expectation, something religious or political.

I said that as a young man I had read a book by a man whose name, until recently, was taboo in the Soviet Union, Leon Trotsky (a sudden stillness in the room), in which Trotsky, expounding Karl Marx's *Capital* (it was in the book, *The Living Thoughts of Marx*), had said that under capitalism each man thought for himself, but no one thought for all. I continued that, as a young man, I had been very impressed by the statement, but as I grew older, I began to reflect: Could any *one* think for *all;* how could that be?

A small shiver of delight seemed to pass through the audience. In the back, however, a dumpy woman stood up and said in a somewhat strident tone (one did not need a translation to recognize the bristle): "And have you read anything else on Marx's *Capital* besides Trotsky?" The audience tensed. "Yes," I replied. "I have read *Capital,* Volume One, *Capital* Volume Two [repeating each time, for emphasis, the word *Capital*], *Capital,* Volume Three [chortles and laughter began in the audience as the woman, still standing, began to fidget]. I have read, also, the *Theoreien über der Mehrwert,* the unfinished and posthumous collection on surplus value edited by Karl Kautsky, and," I continued, "I have even read other Russians on *Capital* besides Trotsky." "Who?" she blurted out. "Some good economists," I said. "I have read Tugan-Baranowsky and even Bukharin." A wave of laughter swept through the room. Up front I could see a man, his head rocking slowly back and forth, crooning dreamily, in delight, as his lips formed the words, "Tugan-Baranowsky, Tugan-Baranowsky," like a tom-tom.

Other questions followed hungrily. What

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they were I can no longer recall except the sad, last one. A young man in front stood up, groping for words: "You have talked of three technological revolutions. From what I know of literature and culture, the first technological revolution gave us Balzac and Zola. The second technological revolution gave us Heidegger and Sartre, and maybe Herman Hesse. What authors have arisen or what can we expect from the third technological revolution?"

How does one deal with such precious naïveté? I replied quietly that I did not believe that technology, or the substructure of society, gives rise to different modes of culture. If that were the case, epochs of history would be walled off from one another and it would be difficult for us to respond to culture across time and space. Culture, at its most profound, responds to the deepest impulses of individuals to the existential predicaments we all have to face, such as death or tragedy. A Marxist analysis, I said, could not account for the persistence of the great historic religions across millennia, while empires had crumbled, modes of production had disappeared, and political systems dissolved. We read *Antigone* because of the impulse to give decent burial to her brother and so, if necessary, to defy the state, an impulse that is not erased by time or technology, as we could see in the extraordinary modern version of *Antigone,* one of the great Russian classics of the Soviet era and one of the great works of "hope," the book of Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope* (the Russian wordplay did not need translation), the search of this extraordinary woman to find the body of her husband who had disappeared in the Stalin purges, in order to give him a decent burial. The hush returned.

At that point, I did not, could not, answer any further questions. I stopped, said *spassiba* to the audience, and stepped off the stage. After a moment, there was a wave of applause and students surged forward, surrounding me, murmuring, thank you, thank you, please come back, please come back. I could barely hold back tears, tears generated by the tension and emotion of that extraordinary afternoon. I did not feel elated, only drained; and sad, sad that the hunger for such a talk was so palpable and so unfulfilled. I also felt an odd turbulence in myself. For years I had fought within myself against giving emotional speeches. They were easy, cheap, sentimental, lachrymose. Often in listening to individuals speaking of the Holocaust, I would cringe or tense myself to hold back the contradictory feelings I had—the urge to weep and the resentment at the speaker's manipulation of the emotion, even if unintended. I could not even face up to the long sessions of *Shoah,* though Claude Lanzmann himself had sought understatement and terseness. In the lectures I usually give, more often in recent years on technology or economics, I have tried to be expository, illustrative and, to the extent I could, witty, resenting the cheap jibes of others to get a rise out of the audience. I had tried that afternoon to speak simply and directly. Yet, against myself the rhythm of that talk, the strophe/antistrophe, had carried me along the waves; and I had come home, to the other shore.

* * *

The following segment of Daniel Bell's journals describes an experience in Moscow.

Our major appointment that afternoon was with Tatyana Zaslavskaya. Her new institute, the All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion of Socio-Economic Problems, had been bruited about for weeks, but the official announcement had only just been made public the day before in a long, half-page laudatory article in *Pravda*. Zaslavskaya had, in the last few years, quickly acquired the status of a legend. She was a woman in her mid-fifties who had spent most of her life in the Academy of Science at Novosibirsk, a place where the more independent scientists and economists had "retreated" and were given somewhat wider latitude than those at the Center in Moscow. A few years before, an extraordinary document, the *Novosibirsk Report,* had been written during the Brezhnev period, smuggled out of the Soviet Union and published in full in *Survey* in London. It was a devastating indictment of the waste, the inefficiency, the sluggishness of the Soviet economy, an attack on the rigidities of the central planning system,

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and discussion of the low productivity in the economy as a consequence of the workers' resentments at the poor management of the factories. Much of this was familiar to serious Western students of the Soviet economy, but what marked this document was the candor and even harshness of its tone and the fact that it had been written and circulated in Novosibirsk. One of the reputed authors of the document was Zaslavskaya. It later appeared that the individual who had inspired the report was Abel Aganbegyan, also at Novosibirsk, who had emerged as Gorbachev's principal adviser on the reform of the economy and whose book, *The Economic Challenge of Perestroika* (1988), maps out in detail a program for the encouragement of markets without capitalism—a daring theoretical move in relation to Soviet economic theory of the past fifty years. Both Aganbegyan and Zaslavskaya had been summoned to Moscow, where they clearly had begun to function as the spearhead of the Gorbachev program for "reconstruction."

But Zaslavskaya, as other stories emerged, was more than just a new ideologue replacing the old. In 1966 a conference of Soviet sociologists had been held in Minsk in which a number of individuals had declared that Lenin's definition of class did not apply to present-day Soviet society; and various schemes were put forward for the reshaping of the official views. Some even argued that those engaged in professional and administrative functions constitute a separate social group, if not a social stratum. And some went so far as to view the party not in the original Leninist terms as the vanguard of the working class but as an instrument for resolving conflicts of interests among different social groups. Stratification theory had begun to rear its head in a society whose official views, proposed by such official Communist theoreticians as V. Afanasyev, were that a socially homogenous society was the characteristic of the Soviet Union and that "the Soviet intelligentsia . . . is a genuine people's intelligentsia with its roots in the working class and the peasantry. Having come from the people, it serves them with devotion and dedication." The new views on stratification and the possibility of a new kind of interest (i.e., class) conflicts paralleled even stronger views that had been stated at the same time more publicly in Czechoslovakia by a group from the Czech Academy of Science under the direction of Radovan Richta in a book that had begun to attract considerable attention in the West.

The events of 1968 brought an abrupt halt to these inquiries and discussions. An apparatchik, M.N. Rutkevich, had been brought in to reorganize the Institutes of Sociological Research and many of the individuals concerned had been silenced, forbidden to publish, banished, or limited to bland and meaningless projects. Some years later, when Rutkevich was proposed for full membership in the Soviet Academy of Science—no higher title or prestige is available to a Soviet scientist or scholar—Zaslavskaya rose at the meeting and declared that it would be a disgrace if someone like Rutkevich were given the title of Academician; and he was defeated! Little wonder that I looked forward to meeting her. . . .

We took the elevator to the third floor of the concert hall annex and entered some offices whose equipment was still being assembled, as desks and chairs were piled high or next to one another. A secretary led us to a large square room and a short, stocky man with graying hair and a salt-and-pepper beard bounded forward to greet me. "I am Boris Grushin," he said, "the deputy director of the Institute. Regrettably, Zaslavskaya cannot be here. She has had to return to the sanatorium." I had heard that she has a weak heart and had not come to the States for that reason. "She had been away for a month of rest," Grushin continued, "but then returned to work too soon, and there has been a small relapse; so she has been ordered back to the rest house." I told him, naturally, that I was very saddened to hear the news and asked him to convey to her my best wishes for her health.

We had been standing during this exchange and as I moved to take a seat, Grushin moved forward and, surprisingly, placed his arms around me in a great hug, beamed, saying: "You have no idea how much of a pleasure this is for me. I never dreamed that I would meet you, especially here in Moscow."

"You may not know why, of course," he

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continued. And then he walked to a bookcase, withdrew a volume that he held in his hand and said, thrusting it at me: "Because of you, I was banished from work and sent into exile." I gave an involuntary shudder, thinking grimly of Siberia, or worse. "You see," he said, opening the book entitled *Massovoe Sozhnane,* "in 1966 I began to write about the idea of mass society, a concept that puzzled many of my colleagues, and I drew much of my classification from your book *The End of Ideology*. The idea was disturbing to people, and Rutkevich had it suppressed and I was banished—to Prague." (I smiled with some relief, having felt guilty at what might have been the unintended consequences of my work). "But in Prague I could not do serious work, so I began a book on Czech beer hall humor and went to nine hundred beer halls to collect the jokes. And I published that!" (Quite a difference, I thought, between writing *Kolyma Tales** and *Czech Humor*—the distance, I suppose, between Stalin and Brezhnev.) "But come, let us sit and talk."

We talked for about three hours. A number of times we were interrupted by telephone calls and Grushin apologized, saying that since the announcement in *Pravda* he had been bombarded by calls from various sociologists and others who wanted to join the institute. He apologized for the disarray of his office and asked a colleague to bring in some fruit and cookies and mineral water, which the man did, jocularly, entering with a large tray laden with these and approaching us with measured steps and putting it down with a flourish. Obviously there was a large degree of camaraderie in the office. As I said, we talked for about three hours. About what? I can only say, about everything. I did not make notes, still feeling, perhaps without warrant, that it was not wise to do so. And I have more often trusted my memory to single out the important elements in a conversation, for I have found that the act of immediately writing down notes (often a means of allaying anxieties) robs one of the emotional tension that has been generated; and such notes then seem "dead" when re-read. Given the pitch of excitement I felt and the extraordinary reception that had greeted me, I felt that I could better trust my feelings to retain the essentials of that conversation even more than a month later, as this is written.

I spoke in English, which Grushin understood quite easily, but he preferred to speak in Russian, which Anne translated. I asked, first, about the scope of the institute and what they proposed to do; what, in effect, did it mean to study "public opinion" in a society such as the Soviet Union? I had also read an essay by Grushin, in the *Moscow News* (in English), that a Harvard colleague had sent me earlier, which berated the new fad of newspaper opinion-polling and the publication of such results, on the ground that they were bound to be spurious.

Andropov has said, he began, that this is a society that does not know itself. I blinked at this mention of Andropov and, courage failing me, perhaps, did not ask why he had invoked his name. Andropov, according to many reports and surmises, had begun the process of "reform," but had fallen ill so quickly that there was nothing to verify those stories. Chernenko had succeeded Andropov and everything was stalled for the while. Gorbachev, it seems quite clear, had been spotted by Andropov, brought to Moscow, and promoted by him to the Politburo. It is one of the mysteries of Soviet life that a future historian, or novelist, will have to unravel. I can only note it here.

"What we do not understand," said Grushin, "is *bureaucracy*. None of the theories we have, including that of Weber, are of any use to us. Bureaucracy fills every pore of our society and it is not clear that we will ever be able to get rid of it, yet we cannot continue to function with such a bureaucracy for it is throttling our life. The Russian bureaucracy, I believe, is unique in the history of sociology."

"Could this not be due," I said, "to the fact that you have never had in Russian history a sense of civil society? You had under the Czar a patrimonial bureaucracy, to use Weber's term, and after that the party began to occupy all social space out of its self-declared intention of mobilizing the society to bring it out of its

* *Kolyma Tales* by Varlam Shalamov (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980). A series of calmly written but terrifying stories about life in the Gulag Archipelago, where the author spent seventeen years as a prisoner.

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sloth. Did not Lenin declare that 'we' must break the society of Oblomovism* and shake up the Platon Karatayevs** who in their passivity act as a drag on 'progress'?"

"Yes," he said, "this is somewhat true, but I do not think it is, in our situation, entirely the fault of the party. In the 1920s, we had vigorous debates about industrialization and collectivization, but it was only when such debates were brutally ended that the atrophy began to set in." (We both left unsaid the names of Stalin and the *Yezhovschina*.) This was, I thought, the essence of Gorbachev. Whether out of a cynical need for legitimation or as an act of true belief, he had returned to the Lenin of the 1920s. These were the golden days of the party, and then came the disastrous turns. It also may be the basis of the restoration of Bukharin to an honored place in party history, since many of the themes of *perestroika* could be traced, to some extent, to Bukharin. The New Economic Program (NEP) had introduced some private enterprise and some markets. Yet it had only been a breathing space; and no clear direction actually followed from it.

"But if you return to the 1920s," I said, "what do you make of the Tenth Party Congress and Lenin's attack on Shliapnikov and the Worker's Opposition group?" (Grushin took the comment as a matter of course: here we were, of an older generation, he a Bolshevik, I a Menshevik, seeking the wrong turns in "social development," yet I could not but think of the irony of my conducting such a discussion, begun almost fifty years ago in the City College alcoves, now in Moscow. What Grushin thought about its Alice-in-Wonderland quality I do not know.) "Decisions like that," he said, "were always taken under duress; perhaps they were right—or wrong. The important point is that we could not go back later and reconsider."

"And now?" I asked. He shrugged. He moved over to his desk and picked up a newspaper, the *Sovietskaya Rossiya* (the paper of the Russian Federation), and pointed to an article whose title was "I cannot forget my principles." "It was," he said, "a dangerous sign." The newspaper itself had not been hostile to Gorbachev, but the fact that they had now printed this long article, presumably by a Leningrad schoolteacher, was disturbing. The article said that *perestroika* could be a "threat to socialism," and that whatever wrongs might have been done in the past, the party has been set on some fundamental paths that had to be maintained. (My conversation with Grushin took place on March 18th. Three weeks later, *Pravda* ran a front-page editorial attacking *Sovietskaya Rossiya* for providing a nostalgic glow to the Stalin era and declared that "hushing up the painful issues of our history is tantamount to neglecting the truth, [and] displaying a disrespectful memory of those who were innocent victims of lawlessness and arbitrary rule." As the Moscow correspondent of the London *Times* reported: "The bitterness of the commentary was seen as evidence of the arguments now wrecking party unity in closed-door discussions. Ironically, in recent months the Western news media have been under attack in the official press for daring to suggest that such deep divisions existed.") Clearly Grushin and his friends had immediately recognized the meaning and the significance of that article. Clearly, too, the lines were drawn and each side knew where it stood. But it had taken *Pravda* three weeks to run an answer.

I asked Grushin what the institute proposed to do. He took out an "organization chart," and said that they planned to set up twenty-five centers in different parts of the Soviet Union to try to raise questions with groups of people about what they felt they could do about things that needed to be done. (A few months before, Zaslavskaya had given an interview to a Yugoslav paper in which she had declared that the Soviet worker was crippled as a human being because of the shackles on him and that *perestroika* could not be successful until the Soviet worker had been given more of a voice.) "This is," he said, "our conception of

* A reference to the nineteenth-century Russian novel *Oblomov* (1859) by Ivan Goncharov. Oblomov is an indolent if also lovable character, symbolic, perhaps, of certain aspects of Russian life.

** A character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, a peasant representing the virtues of "natural man."

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democratization, of awakening consciousness and promoting initiative." "Did that mean," I asked, "that the party would surrender *partiinost?*" "In its old form," he said, "I hope so. There is less need for *partiinost* in culture, and certainly more need for criticism and responsiveness to the actual lives of people." As for the goals of the society, this remained the historic task of the party—to set the goals, he emphasized, but not necessarily to dictate all means.

I asked Grushin the question that had been asked of me all week, in Leningrad and Moscow: "Can *perestroika* work?" "With difficulty," he said. The problem was not only the skewed prices, wasteful use of resources, and the lack of an adequate cost-accounting scheme. All that might, with skillful maneuvering, be managed. The real problem, he said, was "full employment." What this meant was that three clerks were doing the job of two. At the same time, there were shortages in construction workers and in transport drivers, even though the wages were considerably higher than average. [Were there status reasons, seventy years after the revolution, for people wanting only white-collar jobs, or was it simply the fact that people did not wish to work outdoors in the Russian winter, or was it that parasitic Russian disease called bureaucracy that filled all the pores of the society? But I did not voice these questions.] "How does one make a large portion of the population unemployed when the Revolution had promised everyone a job? And how does one break up that intricate network of connections that bypasses all the formal rules and shuffles all the papers round and round so that decisions are never taken and, when they are, often not implemented? That is the secret skin of the bureaucracy. In Russian there is the phrase *na leva,* which means not only 'working off the books,' but so acting that the right hand never knows what the left hand (*na leva*) is doing. This kind of acrobatics had become a high, abstract art."

The conversation was not as formal or didactic as this reconstruction tends to convey. Grushin was a merry man and, given our mutual interest in humor, in my case Yiddish stories, much of the time was spent, intermittently, in trading stories. I asked him if he had discovered any new theories about stages of development in Marxist theory, having told him of a conversation many years ago in Warsaw with Eduard Lipinski, the grand old man of Polish socialism, who had said: "We have learned—feudalism was the age of wood, and capitalism the age of iron, and socialism—it is the age of paper." Grushin replied that there was a sociological counterpart to these stages of economic development: in the beginning we have the theory of socialism as the international form of the human race, then the idea of socialism in a single country, and now, with Romania, socialism in a single family.

I told him that Gorbachev was also proving to be a creative Marxist thinker, for he had applied Marx's theory of contradictions fruitfully to the Soviet Union. "In what way," he asked. "You know, of course," I replied, "that for Marx the crux of all social development is the contradiction between the forces of production and the social relations of production. Marxists had always thought, of course, that this applied to capitalism. But Gorbachev has shown that this applied as well to Soviet society, where there was a contradiction between the forces of production and the social relations—the bureaucracy."

Grushin said: "You make me smile, in a Russian way!" The word bureaucracy brought him back to that question. "You will be interested, I think, in a proposal we are making to the International Fund for a Nuclear-Free World for the Survival of Humanity, which has been set up by Armand Hammer, an international research project to study bureaucracy." The proposal, which he gave me, stated badly that bureaucracy impedes innovation, "is a factor present at all levels of the social hierarchy and the hierarchy of power," and is a factor not "only in the sphere of administration but in all other spheres of modern society," and as such "has long been one of the real threats to the survival of humanity."

The laughter stopped. For a short period, time had been suspended. I had been carrying on a conversation—jokes, history, sociological references—which I could have and had conducted in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Cambridge, England. I was leaving, and going back to places

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where they could still be carried on. But this was Moscow and it was still an open question whether *glasnost,* which for people like Grushin had become fresh air to fill their lungs and allow them to breathe, would continue or be stifled.

We got up to go. There was an awkward pause. Grushin took a copy of his book, published, I noticed, in 1987, and wrote on the title page: "To Prof. D. Bell with the best wishes in memory of our Moscow meeting, B. A. Grushin, 18.03.88." I turned to the next page. There were two quotations, as epigrams. One was from V. I. Lenin. The second, some lines of poetry in the Russian orthography, from G. Apollinaire. What an extraordinary point/counterpoint. There was an awkward embrace of two hands on two hands, and I left.

As we prepared to leave the Soviet Union, I thought of the story of the town deep in the valley that had been cut off by rising flood waters. The Catholic priest had called his parishioners to mass and final confession; the Protestant minister had suggested the congregation gather in the church to await the end; the Rabbi had called together the shtetl and said: "Rebeysai, we have twenty-four hours to learn how to live under water."

The people I had met here had learned to live under water. Many before them had been pushed down and drowned. I thought of what my son David had written us: almost eighty years ago our parents had left Russia and crossed the ocean in steerage. Now, with our passports and business-class tickets, we were leaving with ease. Would we have learned to live under water? □

dissent

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Agnes Heller and Ferenc Feher

GORBACHEV AND EASTERN EUROPE

Perestroika and Historical Compromise?

The history of postwar Eastern Europe begins with "Yalta." Why quotation marks? "Yalta" signifies more than the historical meeting of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill in the Crimea, in February 1945. "Yalta" signifies a major trend in the wartime diplomatic efforts of the "Big Three," manifest in their correspondence as well as the records of their meetings. Paradoxically, "Yalta," or what it could be said to stand for, had, enthusiastically and naively, been proposed by Roosevelt, gradually joined by Stalin (for tactical purposes), only conditionally and reluctantly supported by Churchill. This trend, revealing the deeper meaning of "Yalta," is often misunderstood as the legitimate coordination of the war effort by the three allied powers. In fact, the three powers never fully disclosed their genuine strategies to each other, much less coordinated them.

Because of this incorrect assumption, however, the "Yalta-trend" is sometimes understood as the preparation of the victors for establishing a lasting peace settlement once they were certain of their victory. But the record shows that the principles of a future peace treaty were never even seriously discussed. "Yalta" as a concept emerged gradually in the correspondence between the Western leaders and Stalin, attained organized form in Teheran in 1943, reached its peak at Yalta, and collapsed in Potsdam in 1945. Its real meaning can be read in the agenda of the Crimean conference, which after victory tried to shape the entire world according to the victors' will. It was indeed a serious attempt at a coercive world government by the superpowers.

Although the strategic purpose of "Yalta" was later buried under the debris of the cold war, it provided indirect legitimation for Stalin to do as he pleased (as Stalin himself interpreted the deal). It also upheld the interests of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe (as the Western powers consistently understood the pact). However, the East European nations that were never consulted—or even properly advised—about the implications of an agreement so gravely affecting their future have since 1945 evidenced rebellion against "Yalta." In fact, it is possible to write the history of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe from the aspect of its long revolution against "Yalta." When we refer to rebellious East European nations, we not only have in mind a more or less popular consensus. We also refer to several East European communist or leftist governments that have been overtly or covertly hostile to "Yalta": Tito's government ever since 1945; Imre Nagy's short-lived cabinet during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, which declared Hungary neutral; all Albanian governments since the Soviet-Albanian rift; and to some extent even Ceaşescu's Romanian regime.

There were four distinct phases in Eastern Europe's long revolution against "Yalta." In the first period, between 1945–1948, the noncommunist parties were in the forefront of the battle. These parties did not have the slightest chance of victory. They were national and nationalist political bodies without the slightest experience and with little or no willingness to coordinate the political struggle across national borders. And they had no allies. For, despite cold war rhetoric, the Western

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powers firmly stood by what they had promised Stalin and only reserved their right to a different interpretation of "Yalta." Most of the nationalist forces in Eastern Europe did not have a highly reputable war record; some of them directly collaborated with Hitler. Perhaps most damaging, their social vision was archaically conservative. The one hundred or so million people in that region who were eagerly waiting for modernizing reforms found them offered by the communists, not by liberals or conservatives. Stalin therefore had an easy victory. He created the artificial geopolitical unit called "Eastern Europe" out of nations that had never had a common history, a common political or cultural tradition, or a religious unity. He met resistance in only one country: Yugoslavia.

The second, dramatic phase of Eastern Europe's long revolution covered the memorable years between 1953–1956. The battle against the heritage of "Yalta" was led by the arch rebel in Yugoslavia who had been rehabilitated in Khrushchev's anti-Stalin campaign. However, the Yugoslav leadership committed the blunder of egoistic *Realpolitik*. Instead of raising the great strategic issues involved in the Yalta pact, they conducted a petty vendetta against Tito's enemies and thus lost their moral and political leadership. The banner of the anti-Yalta revolution was picked up by Poland and Hungary. The Polish and Hungarian movements, although never synchronized, reached their peak in October 1956.

The direction of events in these two countries was entirely different. Hungary's revolution, headed by a popular coalition government, made a frontal attack on the "Yalta" system when the Nagy cabinet left the Warsaw pact and declared Hungary a bloc-free country. In Poland, the new government, despite the fact that its nucleus consisted of Gomulka's national-Communist faction, came to the conclusion that for the Soviet leadership the political domination of Poland formed the heart of "Yalta." The Poles were particularly careful not to cross this Rubicon. Soviet predominance over Poland was slowly reinstated.

In the period between the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Brezhnev's death in 1982, a long winter's snow blanketed the "anti-Yalta revolution." Worse still, it had unworthy champions: Hoxha's Albania, a hermetically sealed Third World edition of Stalinism, and Ceaşescu's Romania, which cautiously played the card of anti-Yalta nationalism to compensate the Romanian middle classes for its unbroken domestic Stalinism and scandalously inept economic management.

It is highly questionable whether the 1968 Czechoslovak attempt at domestic de-Stalinization belonged to Eastern Europe's revolution against "Yalta." Our only solid knowledge is that Brezhnev interpreted the Czechoslovak experiment as an outright breach of "Yalta" and crushed it as an anti-Yalta revolution. In fact, the only real violation of "Yalta" came from Brezhnev himself. With the open military intervention in Afghanistan in 1981, he unwittingly committed the Soviet Union to its first unsuccessful military campaign since the inglorious days of the 1940 war against Finland. More important, with this escapade Brezhnev gave such a broad latitude to the concept of "Yalta" that it ultimately proved to be beyond any reasonable limits of interpretation and therefore became unacceptable to the West and the Moslem world.

The fourth phase of Eastern Europe's revolution against "Yalta" is currently unfolding in an extremely complex setting. Poland is still rebellious, or at least turbulent. Romania is still disobedient, although the combination of hunger and terror presents its leaders with the threat of domestic revolution. Yugoslavia is in a constitutional (as well as social) crisis whose outcome cannot possibly leave the USSR indifferent. East Germany is in part the subject and in part the object of a long, involved power game whose outcome could easily rewrite the entire postwar map of Europe.

With these contradictory trends, the whole panorama must be viewed in order to understand the strategy of the Gorbachev leadership. At this stage, only the following features of an emerging policy toward the legacy of "Yalta" can be ascertained. First, similar to Churchill's blunt wartime declaration that he was not prepared to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire, Gorbachev is surely not willing to preside over the dissolution of the "Yalta"

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system. (Nor could he even if he were willing.) But unlike Brezhnev, he is equally unwilling to overstep the boundaries of "Yalta." As far as the Soviet leadership is concerned, the Afghan war has been shelved. The Gorbachev team is still looking for a magic formula to describe their real strategy, much like Stalin's "people's democracies" (his code name for the Sovietization of Eastern Europe), or Khrushchev's "socialist community" (de-Stalinization within a basically unchanged Soviet predominance). But this quest for the magic formula could be the premonition of the Soviet leaders' slowly developing sense of the region's necessary pluralism.

East European Crises and Soviet Solutions

Like Khrushchev's rise in 1953–54, Gorbachev's ascendancy also took place amid a general crisis in Eastern Europe. If we briefly consider the area that covers a wider territory than the countries belonging to the Warsaw Pact (but always keeping in mind countries that had once politically and socially belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence), we can find only three countries that are not, at least for the time being, in a state of crisis. They are Albania, Bulgaria, and East Germany.

But there is a significant difference between the current East European crises and those of Khrushchev's period, a difference Gorbachev must confront if he wants to forge a coherent policy of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. During Khrushchev's ascendancy, each East European country was in a deep internal crisis for the same reason: Stalinist mass terror and totally irrational economic management. Therefore, it was in some measure legitimate to believe that the same panacea could be applied uniformly. Khrushchev, who, from agriculture to foreign policy, was a great believer in uniform, simple, and drastic treatment, did indeed apply his wonder drug of de-Stalinization with Stalinist methods. As a result, he almost blew up Stalin's empire and caused rifts that have never healed.

Gorbachev seems to be much more astute in that he is apparently aware that the present East European crisis could be considered general only in the sense that it envelops almost all states of the region. He seems also to realize that the cause of the crisis in one nation is almost entirely different from that in another. The East European countries live, so to speak, in different historical times: Albania in the Stalinist fifties, Czechoslovakia in the time of the unfinished de-Stalinization of the sixties, and Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Poland in yet different presents.

The character of each crisis is also totally distinct. In Poland, for example, the system has for some time suffered from a legitimation crisis tied to economic depression, itself a result of a long period lacking in reforms. The flawed legitimacy of this regime, which generates a universal and indiscriminate mistrust, then becomes the obstacle to reforming the economy even when the regime, as now seems, inclines toward reforms.

In Hungary, a leadership initially not just realistic but even extremely cautious introduced an agricultural reform decades ago. It also promised wider economic changes and, when these were not implemented, lost its self-restraint. To placate the populace, it embarked on a policy of encouraging unlimited consumerism, which had no backing in national production. The result is, first, an East European nation with a Latin American per capita ratio of debts; second, a country whose leadership squandered its hard-won political credibility by attempting to cajole the populace through consumerism instead of launching moderate structural reforms. Third, and perhaps most important, today's Hungarian political life is characterized by a loss of hope in reforms, whether proposed from the top or below. The result is a near-revolutionary situation in which there is no revolutionary actor.

This long-lasting political crisis with revolutionary undercurrents led to the historic party conference in Hungary at the end of May. If the long-term consequences of the sweeping changes are as yet obscure, the immediate results are obvious. No one remained in the supreme party leadership bodies, in the politbureau, and the secretariat of those who had crushed the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Several of these were even forced out of the central committee. This opens up the possibility of restoring Hungary's genuine—revolution-

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ary and democratic—historical continuity, of "rehabilitating" one of Hungary's greatest revolutions. Furthermore, the change came to a very great degree under the pressure of the party membership (which in turn had been under the constant pressure of the wider populace). It was not due to the "wise" and "gracious" concession of leaders, nor was it simply a "reform from above." This much had to be acknowledged by the new General Secretary Grosz, who is a centrist without a distinct political physiognomy. Genuine reformers now hold seats in the politbureau and the secretariat, politicians who have proved with their acts, not just with words, that they are committed to reforms. Timid and as yet confused but unmistakable demands for pluralism (within and without the party) were heard at the party conference, together with the public recognition of a phrase which had until recently been a sign of heresy: human rights. Most important, Hungarian society received indirect encouragement toward self-organization and relative autonomy, a trend which has been stimulated by the Hungarian opposition for a decade now and which Kadar—as shown in his conservative and aggressive speech at the beginning of the conference, which also serves as his dubious political testament—was prepared to crush.

Romania is the one country where the old Khrushchevite recipe, de-Stalinization from above, could still have beneficial results. But there is apparently no domestic figure able to implement such change. And after twenty-five years of chauvinistic drill, the country would hardly accept external "liberation."

Czechoslovakia is perhaps the only state in which Khrushchev's therapy is being cautiously applied by Gorbachev. The removal of Husak from his position of leadership after eighteen years of repressive rule offers a very limited road to alleviating social pain. But once the populace gets used to the slightly new climate, problems will begin again.

Finally, Yugoslavia is involved in a structural crisis that threatens its delicately balanced federal structure. Its collapse would undoubtedly engulf a number of countries outside the Warsaw Pact (Austria, Greece, Albania) in the gravest conflict. Although the Soviet Union has no "historical" right to interfere here apart from "Yalta," a possible future disintegration of the Yugoslav state could not leave the Soviet leadership unaffected; it might, even more dangerously, whet its appetite.

The distinct character of each national crisis—in their entirety constituting the general crisis of Eastern Europe—will presumably not escape Gorbachev's, or his advisers', attention. The conclusion the Soviet leaders must inevitably draw, insofar as they wish to be realistic, is the following: Even if we attribute the greatest possible credibility to the politics of *perestroika,* that is to say, to Gorbachev's promises of social reform, this policy cannot offer a universal solution to the East European crisis. Khrushchev at least believed that he had a panacea. But in terms of historical time, Kadar and Jaruzelski are contemporaries, even partisans of *perestroika,* which is why their recent, or long-term, fiascos cannot be amended with Gorbachev's methods. Rather, their respective and highly distinct failures, or apparently insurmountable difficulties, bode ill for *perestroika* itself.

Even the most skeptical observer must agree that Gorbachev is at least intent on changing the character of the satellites' dependence on the Soviet Union (if not the fact of their dependency). His efforts to cut an irrational military budget, his intent to walk away as quickly as he can from the Afghan war, point in this direction. But whatever his diagnoses, the remedies are clearly not at the doctor's disposal.

The national crises of the East European region are in part, but only in part, economic in character. But the Soviet leadership simply does not have the "soft money" to relieve Hungary and Poland of their national debt (together equal to the debt of Mexico). And by now it must be clear to the new Soviet leaders that policing Eastern Europe with troops is not a substitute for having organic ties within "the socialist community." Organic ties have never been found by any predecessor of Gorbachev. Nor is he likely to find any. Introducing straightforward market ties with East European countries while refraining from direct political

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interference would only strengthen a trend the post-Stalin Soviet leaders have never been able to control: the "centrifugal" economic propensity of these countries to find any market available for their mediocre products.

The bottom line may be briefly summarized: Gorbachev's New Team is not harassed by any powerful Western pressure. It can now enjoy the respite provided by political divisions in the West, as well as the disarray in major Western economies. Although self-consciously pragmatic and almost totally free of ideological commitments, it is still not able to offer any solution to alleviate the East European crisis. Yet it needs East European unity and relative stability, and, perhaps for the first time, even East European support for *perestroika*. At the same time, the natural candidates in the role of supporters have become debatable allies with respect to the domestic Soviet scene. The best they can do, and this is indeed the recipe they adhere to, is to wait and see (or intervene only when compelled).

This self-imposed caution, or even immobility, only reinforces the troubled stalemate of Eastern Europe.

Mitteleuropa and the German Question

The German question has dominated Soviet politics since World War II. And the Gorbachev period does not promise to be an exception. The Soviet effort aiming at ending the war by peacefully winning the whole of Germany continues. When, more than three years ago, we wrote an article predicting that Eastern Europe would be threatened by the shadow of a new Rapallo, similar to the 1922 agreement between Soviet Russia and a defeated Germany, a host of prominent leftist German intellectuals seemed to be in a hurry to argue that this perspective was nothing but a nightmare of the twisted minds of East European émigrés. We now observe with bitter satisfaction that a reconciliation between the whole of Germany and the Soviet Union (with a possible by-product the emergence of a German confederacy) has become a commonplace topic in German politics, right and left.

The reasons for this dramatic change are fairly obvious. To a great extent as a result of "Yalta," the Western powers have proved incapable of formulating a consistent policy toward Germany. They did not repeat the mistake of Western governments after World War I. Rather, they helped Germany rebuild her powerful economy and used German power to bolster NATO, thus promoting the longest lasting liberal democratic system in German history. However, they could neither achieve a peaceful unification of the two Germanies nor were they prepared to remove the last symbolic vestiges of Germany's dependence on the victors (there is still no peace treaty with Germany).

In terms of *Realpolitik* Germany was bound to turn away from an increasingly weak West (which has changed from economic benefactor to a competitor as well as, become a source of other problems) and instead appeal to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union could, if it wished, deliver the goods: the (symbolic or actual) unification of the two Germanies together with opening new markets for German economic expansion. This is the secret of the continued financing of the East German economy by West German loans and the implicit integration of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into the European Economic Community. It is also the real explanation for the sudden flare-up of (leftist and rightist) German anti-Americanism.

For the Soviet Union, such a turn in German politics, if completed, would mean a dramatic victory. It would also mean a resounding defeat of one anti-Yalta revolution (the East European) at the hands of another. In an Eastern Europe geopolitically and economically encircled by the military power of the USSR on the one hand and the economic power of a confederated Germany on the other there is no chance whatsoever for a revolution. Even today the last financial power a troubled Hungary could turn to is the conservative government of the Federal Republic. The latter seemed to be in a hurry to offer a loan of half a billion dollars, this time overtly emphasizing that Germany has interests in the region, and that it was therefore natural for it to come up with this huge loan. (Such a statement by German

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officials would have been inconceivable fifteen years ago.)

There cannot be the slightest doubt that, apart from its long-range strategic consequences, the trend toward a new Rapallo would be highly beneficial for Gorbachev's East European policy. The fraternity of the two gigantic powers would coerce the anti-Yalta revolution of Eastern Europe into meek submission. Nor would this necessarily be coercion of a violent type. Separated from the rest of the world geographically, encircled by overwhelming military and economic powers, the East European anti-Yalta movement would have no option but to obey.

The present discussion of *Mitteleuropa* must be understood in this context. It has two entirely different meanings. In one version, *Mitteleuropa* as a nostalgic cultural-literary daydream of Hungarian, Czech, and perhaps some Yugoslav intellectuals is a concept of self-defense against Russian-Soviet political and cultural expansionism (which in some of its manifestos displays the same amount of chauvinistic intolerance toward Russian "barbarism" as Russian cultural imperialism toward "minor nations"). Behind such awkward formulations there is, however, the realistic perception that a Central European conglomerate (similar to the defunct Hapsburg Empire) could, in alliance with the West, prove a bulwark against German and Russian supremacy. Whether this cultural daydreaming will ever translate into political power remains to be seen.

Yet another version of the *Mitteleuropa* dream is growing on German soil. It would be unfair to describe it merely as a literary and ideological cover-up for German expansionism, for the preparation of a new Rapallo. Undeniably, however, old romantic notions are being rekindled of a Germany standing between East and West and thus creating, so to speak, a "center" of Europe, which is not part of the West but serves the role of great mediator. And this is precisely what Rapallo, 1922, was all about.

We have traveled a long way toward this fairly ominous turn of events but have not yet gotten that far. A surprising combination of forces opposed to such a perspective has emerged within the Gorbachev orbit: the party apparatus of the GDR, the Soviet army command, and Poland (this time both society and state). The Polish opposition to a combined Soviet and German pincer movement requires no detailed explanation. The more surprising but unmistakably hostile attitude of the East German party apparatus is most likely accounted for by the simple fact that the present state of events (USSR-guaranteed power prerogatives plus economic injections coming from West Germany) seems beneficial. There is hardly any conceivable scenario of even a symbolic German reunification that would not imply a relative diminution in power of the East German party bureaucrats.

The dissatisfaction of the Soviet army high command became visible in a recent outburst by General Yazov, the new minister of defense, a Gorbachev appointee, against a too-liberal interpretation of *perestroika*. Yazov's statement was generally attributed to the conservative stance of the army. We are rather inclined to understand it as a clear warning by the army with regard to its role. Just a few days before Yazov's comments, a highly satisfied Genscher (West Germany's Foreign Minister), emerging after consultations with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, stated that he was now convinced that the Soviet Union is prepared to eliminate its superiority in conventional armies. Where a promise of such a dramatic change in Soviet defense policy after the World War, or at least a hint in this direction, is clearly necessary for the relaxed atmosphere in which preparations are made for a new Rapallo, any such promise would do more than reduce the Soviet Army's domestic standing.

Alternatives of East European Politics Under Gorbachev

There are several possible, that is, logically consistent scenarios concerning East European politics under Gorbachev. Two of them are possible logically, but are totally excluded practically. One such scenario is the escape of a single country from the Soviet-dominated "Yalta" system. There cannot be a repeat performance of either the Yugoslav escape in 1948–9 or of the Albanian withdrawal in 1968. This is due not only to the predictable Soviet retaliation (and Gorbachev left no doubt during

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his visit to Prague in 1987 that the "friendly assistance" in 1968 was still regarded in Moscow as beneficial). Another reason is the unwillingness of the Western powers to assist any defector from the Soviet bloc. Another only logically viable scenario is the voluntary dissolution of "Yalta" by any Soviet leadership, however reformist, in behalf of *perestroika* and détente.

Realistically, then, different possibilities are open to speculation. The most likely scenario remains that of a long stalemate. The Soviet Union's leaders will somehow be able to end its role in the war in Afghanistan. But it will not be able to eliminate the crises in Eastern Europe. Some of the wounds may be healed, but, on the whole, the problem cannot be eliminated, and consecutive East European crises will sap the energies invested in *perestroika*. We think this the most likely option not just because of our general skepticism about the Gorbachev experiment. The main reason for skepticism is that the region defined as Eastern Europe has been so widely diversified in the last decades (or rather: re-diversified, returning again to its old historical pluralism), that the Soviet leadership simply cannot repeat the methods of Khrushchev or find a single therapy for so many different diseases.

Another, not entirely impossible though far less likely, scenario is the above-sketched Rapallo option. The transition of Germany from a pillar of the West to a neutral country that is at the same time the treasurer of *perestroika* would be an event of global significance. Signs pointing in this direction would trigger concentrated and fairly desperate efforts on the part of other Western powers to stop this trend.

The least likely, though not impossible scenario, is the one we would find the most positive of all. The East European opposition has been pondering how best to cope with the historical reality called "Yalta," a reality that cannot be discarded but whose terms can perhaps be amended.

Adam Michnik, the Polish dissident, argues that the Soviet Union had achieved, due to its role in the victory over Hitler, a loose frame of agreement at Yalta, with the Western and Soviet interpretations always different. According to the Western powers, Yalta meant that after the terrible devastation of World War II it is a legitimate interest of the Soviet Union not to tolerate any power on its borders either that plans to attack it or might become an avenue for an attack. But otherwise, the sovereignty of these nations was to remain inviolable. Stalin's well-known interpretation of the treaty was that he could do as he pleased. Michnik further contends that since the Soviet leaders submitted Stalin to severe criticism under Khrushchev, and now Gorbachev repeats considerable parts of this, why should Stalin's interpretation of Yalta be exempt from criticism? Behind this studied naïveté there is a historical perspective and will that express the opinions of large sections of the populace of "Eastern Europe," possibly the majority. It is an offer of a historical compromise.

Those who offer this compromise regard the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe as sheer conquest. But these spokesmen of the opposition, and the populace at large, state that they are prepared to accept part of Soviet expansionism in exchange for renegotiating the internal conditions of the pact.

This should not be understood as mere political grandstanding, for those who make this offer are prepared to guarantee, or at least promote, social peace in the region that would be highly beneficial, indeed indispensable, for *perestroika*. The plan of this compromise is simply an East European strategy of self-Finlandization. □

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George Packer

IN THE SLUMS OF MANILA

Can the Poor Find Their Voices?

On my third day in Manila I saw a woman weeding her temporary patch of the park along the bay. One wall of her house, a squatter's plastic-sacking and drift-plywood hovel, consisted of a hand-painted sign. It said, "10-PESO ACROSS THE BORD WAGE INCRESE."

I was curious, and then electrified. She owned nothing more than her rags and salvaged scraps; and her position there on Roxas Boulevard near downtown was extremely precarious. Yet she had bothered, amid housekeeping and watching out for the police, to put up a pathetic, defiant sign. For an American raised on sporadic protests by a comfortable middle-class against events happening five or ten thousand miles away, that sign came as something like a revelation.

I went to the Philippines late last year to see for myself what the "democratic revolution" of February 1986 meant to the great mass of poor Filipinos. I arrived in the aftermath of a general strike that was dying, but continued to twitch in small demonstrations and work stoppages. Every day a coup rumor plagued the city. On my first morning the newspaper headlines declared that the vice president was willing to take power if President Aquino were overthrown. Hit squads of the Communist New People's Army (NPA) were shooting soldiers and policemen in Manila almost daily. When it reached two or three a day, the police rounded up hundreds of slumdwellers as suspected Communists and set up armed vigilante groups. Several leftist leaders were killed or wounded, possibly by military death squads. Refugees from the war in the countryside had begun to appear in Manila.

I hadn't expected euphoria—it was much too late for that. But I found aimlessness and anxiety in Manila's streets, where garbage had gone uncollected for weeks. In the midst of this tension, squalor, and violence, it seemed bizarre that the city was going about its normal business. Unshaven white men, here for one thing, wandered downtown with lovely brown girls on their arm. Clans of the rich slipped out of private clubs into waiting Mercedes. Whitney Houston and stonewashed jeans were all the rage. Revolution, corruption, coups, typhoons—but at least San Miguel was winning the basketball championships.

As for the poor, they were everywhere. Squatter colonies emerged like snails after a rainstorm. Stick-thin cigarette vendors hobbled through traffic clacking their wooden boxes like bones. Outside the nightclubs half-mad mothers held out half-perished babies for pity and coins. Vast slums spilled from the waterfront deep into the countryside.

F. Sionil José, a leading novelist and social critic, asked me, "What kind of democracy is possible in a country where 60 percent of the people don't even have safe water? The essence of democracy is to get sick and not die." Safe water is not what the State Department has in mind when it congratulates itself on the democratic revolution in the Third World; and measured by safe water, the Philippine brand of democracy has so far produced very little. Most Filipinos seem unimaginably poor and powerless; and if you come to know them they are in some ways even more miserable than they look. Few could speak of any improvement in their lives under Aquino. More than one reminded me of her campaign promise to lower

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the price of a certain widely eaten fish from a dollar; it now costs $1.50.

What has changed? Has anything?

The events of February 1986 (known to Filipinos as the EDSA Revolution, named after Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the Manila highway where soldiers and thousands of Filipinos rebelled against Marcos) have not disappeared from memory. EDSA lingers—as myth, propaganda, source of pride, and also disillusion. To the "yellow" crowd—Aquino's strongest, middle-class supporters—it was a real revolution that has become a comforting memory, its anniversary celebrated with fireworks and disco dancing. To the Communists and their allies in the legal left, who were nowhere near EDSA, it was not a revolution at all. They had boycotted the election and never trusted the unorganized uprisings of the mid-1980s anyway. They now deride the climactic events as a sentimental "picnic" of the bourgeoisie that has changed nothing.

But numbers of people spoke of EDSA with deep regret as a golden age lasting four days, when the country's best qualities, so little in evidence now—unity, restraint, mercy, and generosity—magically flowered. At a poignant New Year's Eve mass, a vigil for peace, a religious parade in a poor quarter, I thought I glimpsed traces of EDSA, and the people around me seemed aware of it too.

Of course, countries aren't restructured by miracles that make private virtues into public qualities. But it was no miracle that, for the first time since they threw out the Spanish, common Filipinos turned the old patronage politics upside down, took power into their hands, and changed their country's history. For the poor, to the myths of salvation by emigration and salvation by Communist violence, EDSA has added the myth of self-salvation. Francisco Nemenzo, a professor at the University of the Philippines, an ex-Communist and now a highly respected figure in the independent left, believes that is its real meaning. "Governments give nothing without pressure from below," he told me, "so it is always the people who must educate, pressure, speak, demand. The people have not been the ones to lose the energy from EDSA, it is Cory's government that has wasted the energy."

What, then, has February 1986 achieved? After a hundred days in the country I believe that something has happened. The change has taken place not in living conditions or election results but in the way the poor think about power. Still isolated, still painfully slow, this awakening challenges the basic assumption of Philippine politics that the weak will bow to the strong. At the same time, sectors of the left have failed to respond to it or even have tried to thwart it. But to understand all this, one must enter at least briefly the life of the poor—Manila's slumdwellers.

In the Slums

"It is order of the President. They are an eyesore," the Manila cop told me, and gestured toward the forty-seven families living on the beach of Manila Bay, across Roxas Boulevard from the squatter woman and her sign. "This is the tourist belt."

His plainclothesmen were busy demolishing the row of shacks on the sand, setting fire to the squatters' flotsam. A few women cursed the police and wrestled timber from them. Their children cried in terror or played in the filthy tide. Their men sullenly packed what they had rescued into their *bancas*—narrow skiffs that earned these families a living from catch the women sold downtown, and from ferrying prostitutes to the freighters offshore.

"But they will come back," the cop said, without exasperation or pity, but with a touch of irony. "And we will take them down again."

Manila lives with its squatters like a homeowner with a plague of roaches, or a dog with fleas—enduring and resenting them, occasionally trying to wipe them out and finding it can never get rid of them. The order to demolish these particular hovels had come down because Manila would shortly host a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). A rain ended today's demolition, dousing the fires and the women's curses, driving the cops into their vans and the squatters under pieces of plastic.

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"It's okay," Elizabeth Juntilla said, huddling under her husband's *banca* with one of her children, and laughing the way Filipinos often laugh when things get unbearable. "We are poor, we are weaker than them. I will go home, I will not come back. Next time they will burn the boat—this time is the warning."

A man rescuing a pile of clothes from the rain wasn't so resigned: "Who is the squatter, a foreigner or a Filipino?"

Elizabeth's home was a fishing town an hour south of Manila called Las Piñas, where I found her two weeks later. Her house, though overcrowded, seemed luxurious after the beach hovels, with sofas, a fan, even a television. The reason she preferred near-exposure on a squalid beach was money, pure and simple: here she could do nothing but sell cartons of water from a pushcart for about 50 cents a day, work that shamed her husband.

Even her foothold in Las Piñas was tenuous. Because of its famous bamboo organ church and its white sand beaches, the spot had potential as a resort. Elizabeth could count at least six demolition attempts, the most recent on the eve of the Aquino-Marcos snap election in 1986. When three trucks arrived people had gathered in the rain to block the way. In the middle of the road they put up a statue of the Virgin Mary. And the demolition crew abandoned the job.

It was a small hint of the "People Power" revolt a few months later (at which Elizabeth was present, feeling, for the first and last time, a "sister" of Manila's rich); but it did not console her much. What she still wanted was to get out of Las Piñas—to the U.S. if possible, or at least to the American naval base at Olongapo, with its limitless demand for bargirls. The struggle for tomorrow's meal preoccupied her far more than any political cause.

"Their poverty is the biggest obstacle," said Sister Christine Tan, a nun of elite origins and former friend of Cory Aquino, who now lives and works in a slum. "Their faces are too much in the laundry tub. They only see the washing—nothing beyond it."

Struggling in Hope

On Roxas Boulevard, from a well-spoken, jobless young woman, I first heard the word *palakasan*. It means roughly "through a strong person," and I encountered it countless times, in various forms: to get anywhere in this society you need a powerful backer. In exchange for his money or protection, you owe him eternal loyalty. To be poor in the Philippines means to be caught in new webs of dependency even if you are being radicalized.

One rainy evening on the steps of the senate building I ran into a crowd that had been waiting at least three hours. They were dark-skinned and therefore almost certainly poor; some of the men wore headrags and no shoes; a few women stood under umbrellas. My first thought was that they were Marcos loyalists, for they seemed to be giving his V-for-Victory salute. They looked too cheerful for a crowd of leftists. Some carried signs in Filipino. All were chanting.

A well-dressed man came out and spoke through a bullhorn. I caught two English words: "Mission accomplished!" The crowd let out a wild cheer and began to disperse. "Senator Mercado has agreed to receive our petition," the man told me. What petition? "For housing rights. We are the squatters, the urban poor." Manuel Villaseñor, the head of a grassroots organization called Kasama ("Comrade"), but obviously no squatter himself, agreed to take me to their neighborhood the next morning.

Three women were waiting under an umbrella for a jeepney home. One carried a sign that said: "Canonigo Resign." Mariano Canonigo was the presidential commissioner for the urban poor. "For the urban *rich,*" the woman, missing some front teeth, said. But what about the V sign? No, she told me in fine English, they were holding up three fingers, not two: the index was "For God," the middle "For Humanism," the fourth "For Country." Hold up these fingers: your thumb presses down on your little finger. That, Amelita Villan explained, is the Philippine rich, crushing the poor.

"Will the senators listen to you?"

"With one ear!" she laughed indignantly.

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"And Cory?"

She hesitated. "With one ear."

Ami and the rest of the crowd lived in an area called Parola, a spit off the vast Tondo slum on the bay bordered by a highway, the miry, putrid Pasig River, and the Manila port. Seven thousand families were packed into this stretch of land, about 200 meters by 600, turned by the previous night's rain into deep mud. Parola was built partly on garbage. Trucks dumped mounds of city refuse at its entrance, which was the great fortune of its residents, for those not lucky enough to get jobs as laborers with the Philippine Port Authority (PPA) sifted garbage every day for bits of broken glass. This was resold to the San Miguel Beer bottling factory in whose shadow Parola had risen up. The whole community was paved with broken glass; and the children who walked barefoot seemed to have adapted miraculously to their environment.

Like goldpanners, men and women were combing through muddy garbage with a specialized piece of metal and throwing their catch against homemade screens to sift out glass. Ami, herself a glass-gatherer, told me they made two cents a kilo from a middleman who doubled that when he resold to the factory. On a good day the glass-gatherers netted $1.50.

But even the best urban arrangements have a downside, and Parola's was the PPA, which owned this land and frequently tried to evict the residents in order to create more rental space for a storage contractor's holding cars. Newspapers were beginning to report that the PPA had come under the corrupting influence of Jose Cojuangco, the president's brother and head of the ruling coalition party, the PDP-Laban. The people of Parola were up against powerful interests.

Manuel Villaseñor, my guide through this landscape of mud, fog, and glass, had once been an organizer for the PDP-Laban, in its early days of reform. An assistant to Aquino's governor of Metro Manila, he had received a letter from the Parola squatters—people who had come back to Manila from resettlement areas like Las Piñas in which there was fresh air but no garbage, no glass, no work—asking him to intercede against a scheduled demolition. He pulled a few strings and halted it; and then petitions poured in from other squatter areas. These he referred to his superiors, but after a month nothing had been done about them. "We can use these people for our own purposes," the governor finally told Villaseñor, "as long as we have these petitions."

The Aquino government wasn't more than three months old when Villaseñor resigned, realizing that it was replacing the defunct Marcos patronage system with a more benign one of its own. Who knows how many thousands of Filipinos have come to this judgment in the two years since? Villaseñor founded Kasama with the belief that nothing from inside the system was going to change it. His group quickly grew to twenty-five thousand members. He expects to be killed for his work and has already taken one bullet in the neck from unknown foes. He said that with twelve trustworthy leaders he could organize all of Metro Manila's poor in two more years.

When he used words like "mastering millions," I began to wonder what Manuel Villaseñor was really after. The squatters called him "our leader" and referred my questions to him, since a former government official knew the problems of the urban poor better than they. Then I learned that Kasama was competing for members in Parola with a rival group.

Across a mud road from Parola, wedged in along the river where it emptied into the bay, lived a few dozen families in shacks. These were shell-gatherers who combed this strip of foul beach for ornamentals sold in the tourist belt and crushed shell used in chicken feed and lime preparation. They were also members of the rival group. A man named Veloria had promised them permanent houses across the avenue of mud in Parola for a $50 fee, which Villaseñor claimed he had then pocketed. Veloria was a backer of Kasama's rival group; he also controlled the shell-selling business. And to round it out, he was an officer of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP), a colleague of Canonigo, the commission chairman whose resignation the squatters of Parola had demanded the night I met them in the rain.

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The shell-gatherers, sitting outside their houses on fifty-kilo sacks of shells, and the glass-gatherers, standing in their rubber slippers in the mud, debated who had conned whom, who had a right to live in Parola, whose leader was truly for the poor. And yet these rivals over a patch of Manila rubbish held no bitterness toward each other. The woman secretary of the new group said, "We are equally poor. We should help each other." And Ami replied, "They and us love each other. Only the president of their organization don't like our aims."

At that moment, two transvestites appeared out on the road and tiptoed through the mud to join the groups. One, in a flowery frock and running shoes, demurely fanning himself, was introduced as Lenny. Lenny was a member of Kasama; his boyfriend belonged to the other group. It is hard to say exactly why this scene typified my whole experience in the Philippines, but I am quite sure it could have happened in no other country in the world.

On return visits to Parola, I learned that Villaseñor had accepted money for Kasama from candidates in the upcoming local elections, including ones from Marcos's old party. He acknowledged that people might accuse him of being co-opted, but he saw no alternative if the group was to survive. Later still, a member of Canonigo's PCUP told me that Villaseñor was under investigation for extorting thousands of dollars from his followers in exchange for phony deeds to their lots. It was, I realized, possibly the reason why the crowd outside the senate building had been holding "Canonigo Resign" signs.

It now seems needless to untangle this knot of turf battles, charges, and countercharges. Parola is worth describing for what it says about the relation of the poor to power. Amelita Villan and her neighbors not only saw themselves as oppressed but took decisive action to unite against a government whose claims to being reformist they no longer believed. "We were squatters under Marcos," Ami said bitterly. "We are squatters under Aquino. We need more People Power." Yet the road to self-liberation has led them into new hierarchies and divisions. *Palakasan* is the path of least resistance in Philippine politics; it describes the relation between Manuel Villaseñor and his followers. I didn't doubt his desire to help the urban poor, but even if the charges against him were untrue, he and the Parola squatters couldn't escape the net of patronage—monopolized by Marcos, modified by Aquino.

Missed Opportunities for the Left

By now it is a sodden cliché that President Aquino has betrayed the masses whose support brought her to power. The legal left in Manila will repeat it *ad nauseam* until you want to believe them wrong. And yet, like most clichés, it basically describes the truth. The local election campaign, which I saw in a number of communities, including Aquino's province, again and again pitted old elites that have been revived now that the dominance of Marcos cronies has ended. There were no issues, only powerbrokers and alliances of opportunity. "This is not building democracy," Francisco Nemenzo observed when the carnival was over. "This is legitimizing oligarchy."

The hopes raised by EDSA and the disillusionment among the poor with the Aquino administration, if not yet with Aquino herself, should benefit the left. They are the only ones who can still talk credibly about "genuine" democracy, since they alone haven't yet had the chance to fail at delivering it. They are the only ones who talk about equality at all. Their cause, it seems to me, is the one just cause. And yet they are plainly losing. Their totals in the last two, relatively honest elections were abysmal. Most of them were in the minority when the vast majority of Filipinos voted for a liberal constitution in early 1987. Demonstrations and general strikes win less and less support. Leaders' voices in Manila sound increasingly isolated. The common explanation on the left is simply repression, worse than under Marcos—the "U.S.-sponsored low intensity conflict." Liberal American activists and journalists swallow this whole, return home, and repeat it solemnly on university panels and in left-wing magazines. So it becomes an accepted truth.

I saw enough terror and heard of enough

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violence, especially in the countryside, to know that, with or without analogies to Marcos, repression is bad and getting worse. But repression is not the main reason the left has failed to respond to the huge opportunity presented by the EDSA revolution. It is because its most powerful sector—the "mainstream left," made up of the underground Communist movement and its "natural allies" on the legal front—is not particularly interested in the kind of independent, self-initiating, bottom-up groups that have emerged among the poor. In fact, it distrusts them deeply unless it can manipulate them. Throughout the tumultuous years since Benigno Aquino was murdered, the Communists and their supporters have missed the moment again and again because demonstrations, elections, uprisings were not dictated by them.

In Manila a thick fog rises out of the chasm between stated opinion and reality. But every now and then a stroke of luck, a sudden confidence, momentarily brings daylight. One such moment revealed a reason for the left's failures. I had just come out of the Supreme Court building where a hearing had been held for the release of several dozen detainees from the island of Leyte. In the military version, these were Communist supporters wanted for violent crimes in Leyte and acting as urban guerrillas in Manila. In the human-rights version, they were innocent refugees from vigilante attacks who had been illegally arrested. Neither side admits that the truth might lie in the gray area, where neutrality is impossible, that settles over a country at war with itself. As the detainees were being herded onto buses back to jail, plainclothes police seized a relative who had not yet been accused, shoved the terrified woman into an unmarked car and roared away. It was over in seconds, but I'd been in the right place at the right time to see how the cops lived up to their claim of abiding by the new constitution.

Then I went to lunch with a young human-rights worker active on behalf of the detainees. Surprisingly, she turned our talk to the revolution; and when I asked what she thought of the Communists, she said: "This is not the human-rights worker talking; this is *me* talking. I've put all my faith in them." She expected the war to be decided in Manila within two years; she wanted to participate if she could. If the Communists won, I asked, would her human-rights group continue to exist? "No government is perfect, but they will be almost perfect, and human rights will not be a problem." And *habeas corpus?* "I don't know. If it would serve the need of the proletariat."

I was grateful for her candor. Yet this activist was saying that she didn't believe in her work, in the hearing we'd come from, in any principled objection to the behavior of the cops. Her work was useful in undermining the Aquino government's claims to liberalism, but it was not based on principle. Her principle was a Communist victory.

Obviously this doesn't mean that most legal leftists are secretly using their position to help the Communists. But it shows what seemed increasingly true as I got to know the mainstream left: that freedom and democracy are more often rhetorical weapons against the status quo than ideas to work for and live by.

Help Only from Below

Enough stories of manipulation of popular groups by the mainstream left exist to form a pattern that mimics the co-option of the same groups by the political elite. The travail of one urban organizer I knew shows how these betrayals have brought many of the poor to a point where they feel they must count only on themselves.

Unlike Villaseñor, Bert Modesto comes from the lower class. The first time I met him he said to me: "The urban poor is the only sector knows what the urban poor problem is. And the urban poor is the only sector knows the solution. Not Cory; not the workers. How can you know what will happen to you if you haven't known what it is to have one meal only? If someone tells me the urban poor don't know what is their problem," he laughed, "I'm not sure I'm not going to box him!" The *palakasan* system, to this Filipino, was "the past."

The idea has been with Modesto since he

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organized aborigines in the Sierra Madre mountains as a teenage lay worker. In 1985 he became chairman of Umalun (an acronym for Alliance of the Urban Poor), under Bandila, the umbrella organization of the Social Democrats in the anti-Marcos campaign. He soon discovered that the middle-class leadership of Bandila valued his group's numbers at rallies but had no interest in education; over the course of a year not one seminar was held. But education, the long-term empowerment of the poor, was Modesto's whole purpose. Soon after Aquino came to power, Umalun split off from Bandila—most of whose leaders, like Canonigo of the PCUP, have left the parliament of the streets to join traditional parties and work in the government.

In the same crucial period Modesto encountered manipulation by the pro-Communist left. In May of 1985 a broad range of legal leftists tried to create a united front of all the anti-Marcos forces, to be called Bayan. Modesto went as a representative of the "SocDems"; the other factions were Liberal Democrats, independents, and, most powerfully, National Democrats, representing the underground National Democratic Front of the Communist Party. An agreement gave the "NatDems" 35 percent of Bayan's votes and required a 75 percent majority to pass any motion, so that the "NatDems" could neither dominate nor be overruled. But on the day of choosing delegates, the "NatDem" bloc, prompted by hardline Communists, tried to pull off a putsch for a greater share of votes. The other groups walked out, the united front collapsed, and Bayan became all but a Communist front organization, which has followed the party's line on all the major issues of the past three years, including the disastrous election boycott.

In mid-1986 Umalun put itself in a loose alliance with a new group of independent socialist intellectuals, Bisig ("Elbow"), affiliated with the Socialist International and chaired by Francisco Nemenzo. The Bisig line appealed to Modesto and his group: critical support of Aquino; an emphasis on organizing and educating the poor as against ritual denunciations of imperialism and fascism; a democratic structure; a readiness to talk about socialism (rather than what the Communists somewhat disingenuously call the "national democratic revolution"). The coalition between Marxist university professors and Christian Socialists from the slums came after months of difficult negotiations. Umalun members hadn't forgotten their experience of benign neglect from middle-class allies. But this alliance has held and is growing, as disillusioned leftists—both "SocDems" and "NatDems"—have split from their groups and begun to join. During a long conversation, Nemenzo, who has spent time in Marcos's jails, discussed what Bisig is trying to do.

It starts from a practical stance toward the Aquino government. She has failed on many counts, the "democratic space" is closing, but it exists and should be used. When the 1987 constitution came before the voters, rather than opposing it on principle like the mainstream left, Bisig supported Aquino as it had done in her 1986 campaign, sensing the people were with her: "And if the people in such large numbers want this, who's to say they are wrong?" Nemenzo, with a lot of anarchism in his thought, may place an exaggerated faith in the readiness of average Filipinos to rise up again when they see the government has ceased to respond to them. I asked whether their disappointment wouldn't simply settle back into the old passivity. "I don't know," he admitted. "But we are living here in the Philippines, so we must have hope."

The great appeal of Bisig is its pragmatism. Its goal may be a socialism based on democratic principles, but it has no illusions about how distant that is. In the meantime, he asked, "What is the alternative to Cory? The military would be brutal and the Communist Party is still far off—and under its present composition, it might be as authoritarian as the previous regime." Bisig's work now is to educate. Nemenzo told me: "We would like to propagate socialism so the basic masses can have their own organizations, pursue their class interests, without manipulation."

This has been said by socialists before, but

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for now Bert Modesto is prepared to believe. It gibes with his passionately held idea of his own role in his group. "I don't want to be followed. I want to execute their decisions—I am the messenger. If the decisions do not come from them, I don't think socialism can survive. Sure, it will die. They tell me at first to be more forceful—that they don't know what to do themselves. Then they think in their mind: a new way! And that is how you change." To Modesto, this is real democracy, whose absence keeps the vast majority of Filipinos without hope or safe water. On my last day he asked me: "What freedom is there if you are poor? But how can you stop being poor if you are not free?"

How likely is the Philippines to escape the cycle of violence and authoritarianism of its traditional elite and its Communist insurgents—to realize something like the democratic, egalitarian aspirations of Modesto, Nemenzo, and others like them? It is probably foolish to be anything but pessimistic; the present drift at any rate will mean more bloodshed and injustice. The idea of a free and equal Philippines now seems a dream; but it exists in the minds of Filipinos.

My last evening in Manila found me back on Roxas Boulevard. A few families still clung to the spot where the police had torn down their hovels. Now that the ASEAN summit had ended, a weathered old woman said, they might try to rebuild. A number of people were gathering to watch the sun go down scarlet behind the freighters out on Manila Bay: squatters, white tourists, prostitutes back from the ships being carried piggyback off the fishermen's *bancas* through the filthy tide, a few well-off Filipino couples. It was spectacularly beautiful this evening and for half an hour we watched and didn't take much notice of each other and shared the beach as if, absurdly, we all had a right to it. □

A Celebration of the Future

Manhattan's old Roseland Ballroom had never housed a crowd quite like the 500 agitators and rebels who gathered on June 30 to celebrate Michael Harrington. There were unionists, feminists, civil rights leaders, community organizers, older socialists, middle-aged New Leftists, campus activists, and radicals from abroad.

Just before the program began, Mike told a television journalist that he planned to enjoy all the speeches. He couldn't have been disappointed. Ruth Messinger called Mike "the man who shaped my political consciousness"; Eleanor Holmes Norton described him as a "piece of America's soul"; Ted Kennedy claimed he was a saint and a scholar. The audience cheered all those words, for the speakers articulated what everyone there wanted to express.

But the end of the program—Mike's own speech—held the most satisfying message. He spoke of immediate political tasks, such as the 1988 election campaign, and a global perspective in which the fate of all peoples are linked; he recalled the individuals and images that had shaped his vision—Dorothy Day, Norman Thomas, the workers in Nairobi who carved napkin rings for export and lived in cardboard cartons on the street. He began by insisting that the evening could be a success only if a celebration of his past led to a celebration of the future; and he ended by inviting everyone in the room to join in the creation of that future.

And so the evening came to a close—words of celebration spoken to Mike; and from Mike to the audience, once again, words of encouragement and inspiration.

Joanne Barkan □

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James B. Rule

BIOTECHNOLOGY: BIG MONEY COMES TO THE UNIVERSITY

American universities in the 1980s have witnessed some striking developments at that tender point where academic research meets big business and big government. Some of the most dramatic of these have involved technologies of genetic engineering—biotechnology, for short—with their much-contested promise to combine extraordinary social benefits with fabulous profits.

- *At Washington University in St. Louis:* The Monsanto Company, in an agreement signed in 1982, channelled 23.5 million dollars to the university's medical school to fund research leading to marketable biomedical discoveries. The plan was to offer funds to individual researchers in exchange for sweeping rights over the commercial fruits of their activities.

Each research effort undertaken with these funds required approval by a board half of whose members were from Monsanto. Under the agreement, members of the firm received virtually unrestricted consulting opportunities with medical school researchers and access to its facilities. Monsanto and the university shared patent rights over all innovations resulting from the funding. Monsanto retained, for commercial reasons, the option of delaying disclosure of research results for up to four years. University researchers participating in funded activities were required to declare any potentially conflicting relationships with other firms and to promise Monsanto that they would not divulge commercially relevant information from the Monsanto-sponsored studies.

- *At the University of California, Davis:* In 1981, the Allied Corporation signed a contract worth $2.5 million with Professor Ray Valentine; the contract accorded the firm patent rights over research conducted by Valentine and others. Shortly after this agreement was signed, Allied purchased two million dollars worth of stock in Calgene, a biotechnology firm founded by Valentine.

These commercial affiliations led to friction with students and colleagues; Valentine was accused of favoring projects in which he had a commercial interest over other topics for doctoral students' research.

- *At the University of Maryland:* In an effort to transform itself into a center for biotechnology and other high-tech industry, Baltimore County is devoting itself to creating what the County Executive terms "the needed infrastructure of roads, mass transit and schools and the establishment of a first rate research university system."

To this end, Maryland's Governor William Schaefer has committed the state to major new investments to expand the University of Maryland, as part of his effort to "attract firms . . . and keep firms here." Private firms are expected to match these funds at later steps in creation of the university "infrastructure."

American university life has recently produced a bumper crop of stories like these, stories of diverse relationships between educational institutions and heavily bankrolled organizations. An unsettling theme runs through these accounts. The disturbing thing about such arrangements is not that they *necessarily* lead to poor research, or private profit at public expense, or distortions in the intellectual agenda of students or faculty—though all these evils may well arise in particular cases. More

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disquieting is the blurring of essential *boundaries* between principles prized in universities and those of other organizations and interests.

Biotechnology is only one of many triggers for the arrangements that stir such concerns. But these new technologies of life dramatize widespread tensions between university values and the rewards of non-university activities in technology and industry. The impact of biotechnology on university life is a microcosm of what can happen when lucrative non-university activities are situated in institutions that must always struggle uneasily for independence.

The Promise of Biotechnology

Everyone can recite practical benefits that have stemmed from "pure research" in the life sciences—ranging from control of disease to breeding techniques in agriculture. Often the connection between original discoveries and their repercussions in practical innovation has been long indeed. Generations, and vast amounts of research and development, have been required to make the link.

But for the new technologies of genetics, the road from scientific inspiration to marketable results is much shorter. At the root of these changes are the discoveries in the 1950s of the mechanisms by which characteristics of living things are transmitted from generation to generation. The modeling of coils of genetic material—bearing thousands of bits of information in precise relationship to one another and reproducing themselves at the moment when new cells are generated—sparked an impulse like that triggered by countless other discoveries in "pure" science: To bring what was now understood under conscious human control.

Since the 1950s, in a celebrated series of experiments, molecular biologists and other researchers have succeeded in altering genes, transferring genes from one creature to another, and "turning" individual genes "on" and "off." The ultimate aim is to be able to create life-forms "to order"—to suppress or emphasize (if not actually create) characteristics of living things that would never occur in the normal course of species reproduction. For skeptics, such drastic intervention has brought great foreboding—as in the fear that some ultra-potent bacteria or other living thing will be released from genetic engineering laboratories. Other critics have simply opposed the principle of tampering with what they see as the natural order of species. As a result of activism stemming from such concerns, genetic engineering has been subjected to close government monitoring. But such objections seem unlikely to block the development of these alluring technologies indefinitely.

For this allure is virtually endless, in terms of both potential profit and alleviation of compelling human needs. A long and diverse list of biotechnology applications beckons to entrepreneurs, investors and scientists—indeed, to such an extent that the same individuals increasingly occupy all three roles.

Medical and pharmaceutical applications have dominated the early commercial development of biotechnology. By altering genes of bacteria and other creatures, researchers have succeeded in creating qualitatively new substances, often useful as bases for drugs or medical tests. Elsewhere the new technologies work by making once-expensive and scarce substances relatively plentiful. In one of the most noted and successful biotechnology applications to date, genetically altered bacteria produce insulin in quantity, relieving drug companies from reliance on slaughterhouses as sources of the naturally produced substance. Many observers believe that biotechnology will eventually alter the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of major illnesses.

Agricultural applications could well rival the medical in long-term economic and social impact. Genetic engineering offers the prospect of altering crops and livestock to fit human needs and environmental constraints. This can mean animals that grow faster or remain invulnerable to normally endemic diseases, or plants that thrive under normally inhospitable conditions. Success in even a small portion of the agricultural ventures now being attempted could have sweeping effects on food production—including significant benefits for farmers and consumers in the world's poorest countries.

Environmental and industrial applications are the least explored thus far, but they are no less intriguing. Genetic engineers, for example,

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are seeking to develop bacteria that would devour oil spills and combat other environmentally noxious conditions. Other specially designed micro-organisms may provide crucial ingredients for high-tech manufacturing.

Finally, lurking in the background, are *military* applications. Any life-enhancing technology, it seems, can be turned to destructive uses, and the role of biotechnology in warfare would be diabolically destructive. The products of genetic engineering would be the ultimate chemical and bacteriological weapons—agents against which the human body could have no natural powers of resistance. Though these potentials have understandably received little public discussion from biotechnology enthusiasts, military scientists appear to be following them with great interest.

Military applications aside, the commercial significance of these possibilities has never been lost on investors. In 1980, the initial public stock offering by Genentech, one of the most famous and successful biotechnology firms, set a record for the fastest price per share increase ever recorded on Wall Street: from $35 at its initial offering to $89 in twenty minutes. The following year, the initial offering by Cetus, another biotechnology firm, set another Wall Street record for the largest amount of money raised in an initial public offering: 115 million dollars.

As of mid-1988, at least three kinds of firms are contending for roles in university-based biotechnology research. First, a handful of firms like Genentech and Cetus, new and successful companies founded explicitly to develop biotechnology. Second, large, diverse firms like Monsanto and Allied, for whom biotechnology is simply one of many means of developing new products. Finally, tiny start-up firms with ambitions to grow like Genentech and Cetus; these firms, often founded by university faculty, may aim at developing just one or a few applications that could bring fabulous success—and perhaps eventual acquisition by an Allied or Monsanto.

What all these companies share, besides the obvious hankering for commercial success, is dependence on some highly rarefied ideas and skills—intellectual capital thus far available mainly from universities.

Biotechnology as Political Economy

It is stunning how, in recent decades, political debate has narrowed to almost obsessive concern with economic growth. Citizens of the world's industrial nations have learned that their economies are capable both of rapid spurts of growth and of deadening stagnation—often in sharp succession. Hence classic issues of political philosophy take a back seat to a single question: Which political forces and personalities are most likely to coax magic from the economic growth machine?

The once-scorned doctrines of Kondratieff are now treated a bit more respectfully by economic historians. To many, his "long waves" of economic growth now seem real enough—and these waves appear incited by technological innovations that ramify throughout economic life. Some observers believe that biotechnology, along with computing, could foster another historical wave of economic growth lasting well into the next century.

But what will exploitation of such profitable technologies do for—and to—the universities? Even if the more extravagant projections for biotechnology prove overblown, genetic engineering is bound to be among the biggest money-making activities associated with American universities in the 1990s. How will pursuit of such profits shape institutions supposedly predicated on values quite different from profitability?

One can exaggerate the novelty of biotechnology in these respects. American universities have always had to make their way among organizations of vastly greater economic and political power. The original land-grant universities have always been expected to make themselves useful to "society"—something that has in practice often meant the interests ascendant within state politics at any particular moment. Today, both public and private universities would be making all sorts of accommodations with outside organizations even if genetic engineering had never come along. These ties involve universities with agencies ranging from the military and the intelligence establishment to private foundations, foreign governments, contract research organizations, and a wide variety of other

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profit-making enterprises. Some universities, especially those in stronger financial positions, have devised administrative mechanisms aimed at maintaining as much of their university personalities as possible in the face of such connections. For example, they have declined contracts where the work being performed cannot be readily disclosed, or they have sought to limit the time devoted by regular faculty in consulting and other non-academic activity. Other institutions have tried to create such boundary-maintaining principles and failed, while some have hardly tried.

But biotechnology does add new levels of complexity to long-standing tensions in university life. These special twists have to do with some unique qualities of biotechnology itself—or to be more exact, the relations of the technology to the underlying science. For one thing, the critical expertise in biotechnology is extremely concentrated in university research laboratories. This concentration may not outlast the next few years; but while it remains, pressures to purchase or otherwise profit from university expertise will be intense. Then there is the strikingly short sequence between scientific discovery and the development of patents, trade secrets, production processes and other sources of profit. Evolution from scientific discovery to marketable properties that used to take decades or generations may now unfold in a few years.

One result is that firms are seeking to get as close as possible to university laboratories—as in the relationships described above between Monsanto and Washington University and Allied and the University of California at Davis. Large firms apparently find it less satisfactory in the case of biotechnology than elsewhere to wait for critical results to appear in normal scholarly communications and then put in-house researchers to work on them.

Then there is the special attraction to universities of claiming for themselves a piece of the biotechnology action—in the form of ownership of firms making the big profits expected to grow out of university labs. But such prospects raise an extremely ticklish question: How is the university to treat faculty and students associated with such "profit centers"? As ordinary university citizens, subject to the same rules as others in terms of promotion, tenure, teaching and academic freedom (for faculty) and grading, distribution requirements, fellowships and progress toward degrees (for students)? Can the university act as investment manager toward an organization consisting of its own people, while still maintaining its role as a university? Unable to answer in the affirmative, President Bok of Harvard, at the urging of his faculty, declined in 1980 to institute such a corporate experiment there.

Yet another special twist to biotechnology is the rise it has fostered in entrepreneurship by individual faculty members. Many consider this the most distinctive policy issue posed for universities by these technologies. Note that the capital required to found firms capable of pursuing such developments is relatively modest by the standards of the past. Martin Kenney, in his *Biotechnology,* estimates minimum costs of setting up a biotechnology firm as six to seven million dollars over a two- to three-year period—an amount by no means beyond the reach of an ambitious professor backed by a handful of venture capitalists. How does the role of researchers as teachers, colleagues and members of the university community withstand a situation where university-based research may lead directly to a private fortune? At what point do the activities carried out in quest of profit on equity—as distinct, say, from paid consultantship for outside interests—become incompatible with university status?

All three of these issues point to a single question: Who will profit from university activities associated with biotechnology, and how will such profit-making impinge on university life? For many universities, current conditions make such questions all the more acute. Since the 1970s, American higher education as a whole has been experiencing a recession, if not a depression. The often indiscriminate expansion of the 1960s quickly gave way to a period where student populations were falling and where government support for research was cut, but where operating expenses rose sharply. Under these circumstances. the idea of making university functions self-financing has taken on a special appeal.

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In a way, this is ironic. Genetic engineering is heavily underwritten by federal research funding. None of the firms active in the field today, large or small, would have an agenda without the vast investments in basic research made by the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and other funding agencies. Indeed, much of the pressure on universities in these connections is pressure from entrepreneurs to situate commercial research as close as possible to federally funded laboratories, so as to be first in line for patents and other profitable spinoffs. Thus ideas developed at public expense and on behalf of public goals are being converted as rapidly as possible to private profit-making.

Enthusiasts of these university–corporate symbioses find little to worry about in these developments. The situation would be different, they argue, if biotechnology were somehow a corrupting activity—second-rate in its scientific inspiration or destructive in its social effects. But to the contrary, proponents insist, these developments are state-of-the-art within their academic disciplines. Moreover—perhaps with the ugly exception of military applications—genetic engineering has every prospect of yielding a generous outpouring of life-giving innovations. Why shouldn't universities welcome the collaboration necessary to foster the new technologies?

But the problems of university involvement in biotechnology have to do not with the notion of participation in principle; the rub comes in the specific terms and arrangements. When universities accommodate themselves too thoroughly to the agenda of non-university institutions, they begin to lose the qualities that make universities worth having in the first place. In the case of biotechnology, at least three of these essential qualities are vulnerable.

Communications. As many have noted, free flow of ideas and findings is, or ought to be, a basic element of science. The only way that scientific work can properly be acclaimed is by the consensus of those in a position to judge for themselves. Much the same ethic holds for all elements of university life; in the humanities as much as the sciences, a free market of ideas is the precondition for both teaching and scholarship. Those who work in universities take it for granted that ideas should be assessed in terms of their truth-value, rather than in terms of who concocted them, who has access to them, or what profits they can produce.

Development of scientific applications for profit has to run counter to this ethic at some stage. In the case of biotechnology, one can hardly expect researchers with vast capital investments in a process, a patent or a trade secret to share their results in the same fashion that they would in a less applied setting. Hence the requirement imposed by Monsanto on researchers funded by the firm at Washington University that dissemination of results be restricted where this was deemed commercially necessary.

Teaching and Curriculum. The most vulnerable members of any university community are students. They, presumably, start by lacking the intellectual antibodies against poor ideas and irresponsible teaching that learning will eventually provide.

One form of responsibility incumbent on universities is to make available to students a wide array of intellectual possibilities. University collaboration with outside agencies may lead to distortion of such possibilities. There is the danger that curricula may be skewed toward the profitable, rather than the profound. Faculty absorbed in lucrative research ventures may be unwilling or unable to help students consider research problems whose merits are strictly intellectual. And all this may be true without conscious intent on the part of faculty.

Another form of skewed opportunities can arise when higher education is treated as "infrastructure" for industrial development—as in the planning for the University of Maryland noted above. Obviously students approach universities with all sorts of intellectual and career goals in mind. But if the only curriculum available is one tailored to the needs of industrial clients—or any other outside interest—then students lose access to what all universities ought to provide.

Intellectual Agenda. The intellectual puzzles of biotechnology are as compelling as any on the agenda of the life sciences. But no one has suggested that no others are equally compelling; and certainly we have no reason to think about any discipline that what is most lucrative

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will always be worthy of attention in strictly intellectual terms.

One does wonder about microbiology, biochemistry, and other fields where biotechnology has taken on such special import. Will history regard the 1980s as the period in which an array of promising intellectual openings were missed, because too many resources and too many highly talented figures were absorbed in applied pursuits? Will students be willing and able to consider intellectually compelling but noncommercial subjects for their research? Will university administrators be able to weigh the opportunity cost of encouraging research in applied directions, against the more abstract alternatives?

What response, even in principle, would suffice to preserve the special virtues of university life against such pressures?

For some, the answer would be to forswear all university involvement with biotechnology and any other activity likely to generate private profits. But such a response, at least in the case of biotechnology, would raise problems of its own. There can be no doubt that biotechnology promises both first-class science and life-enhancing practical benefits. One would hate to see these possibilities banished from the university, just as one would hate to see biotechnology researchers deprived of university influence. But how does one create a role for such potentially lucrative research that does not tend to make the university simply another profit-making institution?

I can hardly offer a comprehensive answer to such a difficult question. But consider a few changes that might help universities protect their special qualities while still providing a setting for needed research:

- Separate ownership of biotechnology firms from teaching responsibilities. Faculty ought not to teach in areas where their commercial interests are direct and proprietary. They ought not to have to weigh the value of students as present or prospective *personnel* against their value as contributors to the intellectual discipline. Nor should there be any danger that generations of students emerge from the academy whose intellectual capital is programmed to the needs of a particular firm.
- Create special incentives for scientists to remain *free* of commercial ties. Such a step would require participation both from universities and government sponsors of science. Sheldon Krimsky, the Tufts University expert in biotechnology policy, points out that many science policy issues are decided by scientists who are themselves commercially involved in the activities they are supposed to decide about. If preference in such things as participation in science policy panels and access to grants were allocated to those who chose to remain independent, Krimsky argues, the whole system would benefit.
- Ensure that new teaching ventures funded by, or in response to, lucrative forms of cooperation with outside agencies do not slight the less commercial elements of the liberal arts curriculum. If biotechnology firms want graduates who will serve as lab technicians and researchers, that possibility should hardly be denied to students planning careers. But undergraduates enrolling in programs conceived in response to such possibilities should have the same opportunities, or obligations, to study Plato's *Republic* or Shakespeare's sonnets offered to any undergraduate. The same strictures should hold, *mutatis mutandis,* for graduate students. Universities do provide a kind of "infrastructure" for economic activity, whether they intend to or not. But a curriculum whose *only* rationale is to provide such infrastructure does not belong in a university.

These suggestions obviously touch on only a few of the policy issues raised by biotechnology and its kindred activities. And clearly ideas like these are much easier to envisage in principle than to put into effect. The most compelling need is to get such ideas considered.

What's at Stake

Since Clark Kerr's fulsome *Uses of the University* a generation ago, the notion has become commonplace that modern universities are "into" everything. Their constituent members and units are enmeshed with an enormous array of other social institutions and interests,

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from mediating labor relations to preparing environmental reports to advising farmers on long-range market planning. From this fact, many have drawn the conclusion that universities are properly no more than the sum of the services they offer—with little to distinguish their inner workings from those of profit-making think-tanks or consulting services.

Yet the differences are fundamental. It would be disastrous to slight them. In a world where more and more organizations, public and private, have strictly defined "missions" to accomplish, and where the bottom line in these missions is profit, productivity or narrowly defined efficiency, universities stand out. They stand out because the nature of their "productivity" is inherently diffuse, and the results they are intended to produce are extremely hard to define in instrumental terms. True, we who work in universities are supposed to produce learning in our own right, and students who are more learned at exit than at entry. But success or failure in these efforts is not to be judged on whether any outside institution works more profitably as a result. Our research may lead to a better mousetrap or to the perfection of arguments for total solipsism. Our students may leave us determined to make their personal fortunes by age thirty-five or to spend the rest of their lives cultivating their karma in a commune. We may take satisfaction in all such outcomes, provided that the thinking involved was as acute and broadly informed as could be. In short, universities are not charged to ensure the worldly success of outside institutions, nor to uphold any values other than the sharing and improvement of ideas.

A university as a whole can virtually never run at a profit; it always costs more to administer a comprehensive arts-and-sciences curriculum than the institution can realize from fees for doing so. I have always felt that this is a lucky thing. It makes it less likely that anyone will get the idea that, by changing the content of this program of instruction or that line of research, the university will finally start showing a decent return on investment. It reminds us that bottom-line accounting has severe limits for institutions geared to pursuit of good thinking and liberal learning as ends in themselves.

These are, to put it mildly, rare qualities in a highly bottom-line-oriented world. The inefficiency of university institutions and impracticality of university people have always evoked facetiousness—much of it well deserved. Yet the informal, collegial, slightly haphazard qualities of university life also reflect values that are in short supply elsewhere. It is striking how important these qualities are to many people. One cannot fail to be impressed, for example, by the financial and other sacrifices that young scholars are willing to endure, in hopes of making a university career. Yet the fact that research and teaching in the university should attract such talented folk, who could be certain of more lucrative careers elsewhere, should hardly surprise us. Many people are permanently disenchanted by the prospect of spending their lives in hierarchical organizations geared to producing one sort of instrumental result or another. To work in a setting where one does not have to sell people something they do not need, nor produce a result the wisdom of which one may fundamentally doubt, is a privilege.

These special qualities of university life need defending. One need not be anticlerical, antimilitarist or even antibusiness to insist that universities must not be expected to work like churches, armies or firms. Just as it would be disastrous for any of these institutions to emulate universities in pursuit of the results they seek, so is it for universities when they depart from *their* characteristic virtues to accommodate to outside institutions. As the case of biotechnology shows, university values do not maintain themselves automatically—especially in the face of situations in which some element of university life suddenly takes on great instrumental value to outside interests. The conclusion one must finally accept regarding biotechnology is scarcely that it should not be pursued, nor indeed that it should never be pursued within university settings. It is that its pursuit must not be allowed to erode those special qualities of openness to new ideas and primacy of intellectual values that make universities distinct. □

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Fred Siegel

DEPENDENT INDIVIDUALISM

A Welfare State Without an Ethical Core?

The decline of the Republican right and the renewed interest in major social legislation compels us to ask a crucial question: Can the welfare state fulfill its promise without a strong ethical core? In Western Europe that ethical core was usually provided by social democracy. In America social democratic traditions have been severely undermined by radical individualism. But without cohesive and ethically informed political communities and movements to stand watch over the legislative process, reforms tend to be waylaid by powerful interest groups and even to aggravate the problems they were designed to deal with.

Eight years into the most conservative administration since the 1920s, support for the welfare state in America is more widespread than ever. The political currents driving the state-sponsored expansion of child care and long-term health care for the elderly are so powerful as to have overwhelmed the Reagan administration.

This support for the expansion of the American welfare state seems all the more remarkable given (a) the unmistakably libertarian, not to say anarchic, trends of American culture and (b) the sharp decline of institutions like trade unions and big-city political machines that were long the engine of welfare-state policies.

Our conventional view of American history places the conflict between the welfare state and self-reliant individualism at the core of post-Depression American politics. But in actuality, individualism and the welfare state have been marching arm-in-arm over the past three decades. The welfare state is no longer driven by New Deal sentiments of social solidarity. Instead it is the mechanism that, prosperity aside, has freed the individual from the social burdens once borne by family and church and fraternal, work, and community organizations.

Contemporary political life is based on two remarkable inversions. First, as the foundations of the welfare state have shifted from, roughly speaking, the ideal of social solidarity to self-interest, the welfare state has in effect stolen the individualist clothes of its critics. But as Daniel Bell points out, capitalism, too, has been shorn of its transcendent justifications. Capitalism, as the Reagan years have made clear, defends itself in the hedonist terms of its cultural critics. The Reaganites have gone so far as to suggest, Mencken-like, that the only possible objection to the recent carnival of debt-driven consumption is a fear on the part of Democrats that people might be enjoying themselves.

These dual reversals, the one by deepening the support for the welfare/insurance state and the other by undermining the status of capital, have made government activity seem more legitimate and desirable than ever. The very success of Reaganite consumer capitalism has intensified the demands placed on the welfare state. And meanwhile, the triumph of the market, which has not only been internationalized but has spread from the economy to the social sphere at home, has left increasing numbers of people bereft of traditional social and institutional protections. One response has been a rapid growth of state-level social services and economic promotion, even as Reagan marginally reduced the scope of federal government.

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The most dramatic example of the process whereby the old justifications for state action have broken down and been replaced by new ones is in the workplace. Recent administrations have in effect withdrawn government protection for unions by allowing the Wagner act to be eviscerated. The workers' organizations that were once at the heart of the welfare state have been reduced to a mere 17 percent of the workforce. But even as unions have been forced from the factory floor, the state has not similarly withdrawn. Instead, the state, through the courts, has become the guarantor of new "rights-based protections" for workers. But instead of aiding workers *as a group,* these new protections against, for example, arbitrary employer actions—which have grown as the unions have receded—are extended individually to each worker.

Loss of Community

The social democratic tradition, which rejects both forced collectivism and radical individualism, has always wrestled with the unavoidable tensions between individual claims and common needs. Social democrats have by and large recognized that the individual is sustained by the community even as he or she may also stand in opposition. Determined to ease this tension, they have argued that what's important is not so much what differentiates people as what allows them freely to choose mutuality.

The New Deal ethos, a somewhat social democratic response to the absolute claims of individual property rights, redefined the balance between the individual and the community. Roosevelt largely succeeded at what Alexander Herzen once described as "the most difficult social goal": to understand "the extent and sacred nature of the rights of the person, without destroying society, without fracturing it." The one would be reconciled with the many, said Roosevelt, by "extending to our national life the old principle of local community."

The idea of a national community, spiritually infused by the camaraderie born of depression and war, served as an implicit reproach to proponents of private profit making. Lyndon Johnson hoped that his programs would create a society "where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community."

That hunger for community has, despite its ghostly appearance in some speeches at the 1984 Democratic convention, largely disappeared from the national political agenda. It was swept away by the enticing promise of personal liberation. Erected as a barrier to property-rights individualism, the solidaristic ethos of the New Deal was undermined by new forms of individualism—namely, an expressive individualism made possible, ironically, by the New Deal's legacy of mass prosperity.

Even without the excesses of the sixties, the ideal of community would have declined because its social and institutional basis had already eroded. A Great Society, a national community, depended for its support on the cultivation of the habits of cooperation nurtured by "secondary" and local social institutions. But from the family to the workplace, the organizations that once, however imperfectly, served as a training ground for what at the least had been a common and at the best a cooperative experience, were now in marked decline.

Sources of self-restraint and stable identity such as the family, the neighborhood, and the institutional church were increasingly in disarray. At the same time, the broad-gauge democratic institutions such as political parties, the draft army, the comprehensive high school, the department store, the general magazine, and the mass-market movie theater, all of which created sets of shared experience, have either been dismantled or discredited. We now have magazines that circulate only to selected zip codes. And the movies went from production for a general audience to market segmentation and then to the even narrower-gauged viewing of the VCR-centered living room. With the VCR, even when we are together in watching the same movie, we are together alone.

America has always been defined by its centrifugal tendencies, but historically these were partially counterbalanced by inherited

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traditions, however diverse. In the 1960s and 1970s, individuals, behaving like fragments of an exploded consensus, broke through the ever thinner walls of tradition in pursuit of transcendent personal satisfaction. Looking for nirvana, they found . . . the market.

The assumption that individual, largely context-free, choice should always be paramount has also come to entail the notion that there is no collective/common learning, so that we each begin *de novo* to reconstruct our own personal social weal. The effect, to overstate somewhat, is that the principle of the market, the totemization of choice, now informs not only the economy but all the other institutions that once provided a common memory and counterbalancing of principles to the sovereignty of individual desires recorded as market preferences. Or, as one of my relatives put it, "from now on, everything is à la carte."

Long March of Hedonism

Americans of a liberal bent tend to regard the 1930s as the paradigmatic decade, the period against which current changes can be measured. But viewed from the broad sweep of the twentieth century there is another decade, the 1920s, the era of the first mass media and the first taste of mass consumption, which has an almost equal claim to be called paradigmatic. If viewed through the prism of the 1920s, the collective struggles of the New Deal and World War II eras were only a temporary interruption in a long march of self-fulfillment to newer and better forms of consumption. What made the sixties different was that for the first time mass-produced goods were often seen as a threat to individuality and personal wellbeing.

It's not that the 1960s saw the abandonment of consumption as the route to self-satisfaction. Rather, there was a new shopping list, because the mass-produced goods were unable to deliver the higher levels of satisfaction that had come to be expected. The restless of the 1960s, looking to move up the hierarchy of satisfactions, were not so much critics of capitalism (they would soon pioneer the boutique America of the 1970s) as they were hostile to its failure to deliver the ever-increasing pleasures it promised.

The triumph of choice-driven hedonism is not confined to Yuppie Reaganites. In the age of me-generation evangelists preaching self-gratification, the posters of the once austere and still Stalinist French Communist party have featured a comely brunette and the slogan "Une vie plus heureuse . . . Adherez au parti communiste." Roughly translated, "have more fun, join the Communist party." The future, it would seem, holds religion without hell and "socialism" without sacrifice.

For young Americans who rejected the "off-the-rack" identities of their parents, life has increasingly been a matter of customizing what are to a great extent self-chosen identities. Party politics, offering only an either/or choice as compared to the five hundred or so television programs available on a day's cable television, is an affront to sensibilities pampered by the personalized promise of product differentiation. A consequence is ticket-splitting. Rather than vote down the line like their parents, they shop among the candidates/market choices offered.

The upshot is divided government. Prior to 1946 and the postwar prosperity that helped produce ticket-splitting, the party that controlled the White House almost always won both the House and the Senate. But between 1957 and 1988 government was divided 60 percent of the time, and 80 percent of the time between 1969 and 1988. Because divided government is generally ineffective government, the very process tends to reinforce itself. Ineffectual administrations deepen the hostility to party politics, which helps generate split-ticket voting to begin with.

Single-issue politics is another growing trend. Single-issue campaigns emphasize, like the market, intense personal preferences of scattered groups or individuals—the consequence is that the age of designer jeans also produces designer politics. Together, divided government and single-issue politics have substantially contributed to a decline in middle-class voting. But even as voting declined, other forms of middle-class political participation have been on the rise. Instead of working through a political party, the middle class can now turn to direct action through the courts.

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The courts provide for the semi-private pursuit of what should—or could—be public policy. The political party's decline has brought the lawyer's rise. In the midst of Reagan conservatism, even as federal cutbacks have pushed many of the poor out of the safety net, the courts have continued to build, willy-nilly, a rights-based shadow welfare state. The old adage, "You can't sue city hall," no longer applies. Innovative judges and lawyers have used a once-obscure section of the 1871 Civil Rights code to enable advocates to win city resources for the homeless and increased rent payments for welfare recipients.

Between 1982 and 1985 the number of lawsuits against municipalities jumped 100 percent, with the average suit in 1985 asking between one and two hundred million dollars in damages. The suits, which have dealt with everything from support for the handicapped to zoning, have become, notes a prominent lawyer, an all-purpose "weapon against any action taken by a municipality." And although the litigants don't always win, on 1871 Civil Rights suits alone local governments paid out nearly two billion dollars over the first five years of the Reagan administration. The effect is a rough retributive justice. But the perverse irony is that the more a municipality tries to do for its citizens in the way of providing public health, public recreation, public hospital and rehabilitation services, the more it is liable to legal action.

In a similar vein, stress-related cases, far and away the fastest growing occupational ill of this decade, have become another stopgap substitute for generalized health coverage. "Does your job make you sick?" reads a Los Angeles billboard complete with a number to call. If it does or if you claim it does, you can now sue in twenty-six states. The effect, coming on top of the doubling of workers' compensation premium costs to thirty-five billion dollars since 1980, is that aid to the disabled "has become part of the welfare system." Or perhaps nonsystem would be a better way to put it since, while the rate of industrial accidents has actually been declining, the percentage of compensation claimed by the lawyers prosecuting these suits has risen. The bar has been the chief beneficiary of this shadow welfare system.

On to the "Burbs"

The growth of centrifugal tendencies in American life is nowhere more concretely expressed than in the rise of what has been described variously as the "anticity," the "slurb," the "technoburb," or the "urbanoids." If no one name has been able to stick to what is clearly the most important demographic development of the past twenty years, the leapfrogging of the American population beyond the cities and the older suburbs, it is because the organization of these areas is so diffuse and fragmented as to defy easy characterization. The sprawl of the "technoburb" is in effect a mapping of uncoordinated individual choices. This new entity has no clear boundaries and, like American culture, it lacks, says historian Robert Fishman, "any recognizable center to give meaning to the whole."

Dominance of the center cities is, in the words of H.G. Wells, "as obsolete as the mailcoach." The traditional suburb was both detached from yet part of the magnetic field of the metropolis. This is no longer the case. In what demographers describe as a "true revolution," considerably more than twice as many commuters shuttle back and forth between suburbs as commute between a home in the suburbs and work in the old cities. In Gwinnet, the nation's fastest growing county, which lies outside Atlanta, only one worker in twenty commutes to the city. Liberated by the federal highways system and information-age technology, many corporations and a large chunk of white America have seceded from the disorder and crime of city life.

If there is one thing these fast growing areas have in common, it is antipathy to the city. The ideology of these outlying areas is a secularized version of the pre-New Deal belief that sin stemmed from city life. Big-city machine politics helped create the ideology of the New Deal by challenging the pastoral ideology of rugged individualism. Urban life required

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government support or public cooperation. Interdependence was the order of the day.

Suburbanites of the 1950s tended to define themselves in terms of a common way of life and shared sense of values. The idea of neighborliness brought with it a sense of that cooperative spirit that had sometimes characterized city life. Driven by the emotional costs of depression and war, suburbanites, like many other Americans, were attracted to structure and security. Loyal to their organizations and to their neighbors and family, these people actually seemed to enjoy socializing in their backyards. These nefarious trends were quickly sniffed out by William H. Whyte, C. Wright Mills, and thousands of cliché-mongerers who proceeded to rail on and on about the loss of individualism and the dangers of America becoming a society of automatons.

They needn't have worried. The new suburbs are characterized by a palsied sense of affiliation. The "belongers" are gone, replaced by single-minded careerists whose search for success seals them off from social pressures of nosy neighbors. In the words of one longtime suburbanite, "everyone is going their own way." Even if they do know each other, neighbors are now less likely to share the same values, the same sense of the world, than those who had emerged from the shared experiences of the thirties and forties. Advertisers and merchandisers have long understood this process of fragmentation.

The suburban worldview that Lewis Mumford described as "a collective effort to lead a private existence" has increasingly come to define the political life of what is now a suburban nation. Political power, and the ideas that animate it, have followed the shift of wealth and population into the suburbs. At the end of World War II urban incomes actually exceeded suburban ones. Today, while suburban per capita income outstrips the city's by one-third, the average suburbanite pays twenty-five percent less in taxes. Only a decade-and-a-half ago, the cities held a four-seat edge (148 to 144) in Congress. Today there are 228 basically suburban seats but only seventy-nine primarily urban districts.

The urban crisis has virtually disappeared from the national agenda—when's the last time you heard a speech on the subject? Both Dukakis and Bush have depended on suburbia for their core support. Bush salvaged the nomination by winning the suburbanites of Nouvelle Hampshire who had fled Boston's crime rate and Massachusetts's taxes. Dukakis, barely touched by the passions of the civil rights movement or Vietnam, made his mark as a procedural reformer pushing issues of primary concern to suburbanites—issues like insurance-rate determination and health-care cost containment.

Where communities of a sort flourish in the new suburbia, they thrive as "special interest subdivisions" that help undergird special-interest politics. The covenants of the rapidly growing private communities restrict ownership on the basis not of race, but of age, marital status, or the presence of children. If Gwinnet's transient residents, consisting almost entirely of baby boomers, complain of a shortage of grandparents, that, in part, is because the "seniors" have migrated to their own new settlements. Many of the fastest growing residential areas in America are child-free retirement complexes. These generally walled and gated complexes, are sometimes further subdivided into areas for high-tech enthusiasts, nudists, tennis buffs, etc. They are private cities complete with their own police and sanitation.

This sprawl of "special-interest" housing has been described as having the political character of "a loose confederation of shopping centers." The shopping malls, fractional private cities, whose walkways are the replacement for town commons or public parks, "provide what little civic identity exists." But where the different classes had an awareness of each other as they mixed to some degree in great city department stores like Macy's, the suburban mall shopper is "less class conscious," because the malls themselves have already been class segregated.

The two-income suburban/exurban families can use their cars to create a kind of customized city for themselves. The center of this new ad hoc city, says Robert Fishman, is the individual household that can use its car to gain access to

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a dispersed but full range of urban amenities, including cultural events that increasingly take place at the malls. But therein lies the rub. In a parody of blinkered individualism, those individual choices have disastrous collective consequences for traffic. Planning officials responding to the tremendous hostility generated by growing traffic jams explain how they could solve the problem if (a) they could convince potential drivers to share a ride or (b) impose ramp metering to control the flow of individual cars onto the highways. The difficulty, as one official put it, is that "When you meter somebody, you're penalizing an individual who may not see the benefit to the community." The lone individual riding in his car, a distant heir of the lone cowboy on horseback, insists on riding solo across ever more crowded highways as the aggregate effect of these discrete choices is near gridlock.

Freedom from Blame and Responsibility

But what, you may ask, does all this have to do with the welfare state? The answer is that the primary means of regulating the conflict between drivers is also increasingly the principle on which the welfare state is based. Drunks aside, we no longer talk of the individual driver as carrying a moral responsibility to drive safely in the interest of others. Instead, as Roger Simon points out, "We don't feel that it is problematic for drivers to be relieved [via insurance] of the financial harm of their own faulty conduct. . . . [M]odern social insurance techniques . . . break the link between compensation and fault." Rather than being understood in even partially moral terms, accident insurance not unreasonably assumes that the risk of damage is simply part and parcel of the cost of driving. The concept of social cost, which applies to unemployment as well as to automobile insurance, converts injury and fault into costs to be spread as widely as possible.

Modern insurance techniques not only free individuals from blame, but also from the community pressures which once regulated conduct. Most dramatically, the growth of social insurance in the form of public and private pensions allows the generations to be more free of each other, both geographically and emotionally. Other forms of public and private insurance mean that the network of mutually interdependent ties upon which an individual or family once relied has been replaced with an impersonal version. In a pinch, instead of being dependent on the whims of Uncle Moe for a loan, the modern individual is dependent on the less personally stifling and/or engaging connection to a risk-management bureaucracy.

Insurance principles isolate the individual even as they also aggregate people by sorting them into statistical "communities" based on categories of probable risk. "Risk," says Roger Simon, "creates its own collective order. It is the subtle but totally coordinated order of an actuarial table. Without bringing people into a shared discourse or common rituals, it attaches precise links between them. Without punishing, moralizing or redeeming, it provides for the security and harmony of the social body by coordinating risks and access." In a situation in which society is largely a multifaceted insurance agency we are, in short, alone together.

It was Oscar Wilde who saw the possibilities collective security could create for what he hoped would be the rich development of personality. "The chief advantage that would result from the establishment of Socialism," Wilde wrote, "is undoubtedly, the fact that Socialism would relieve us from that sordid necessity of living for others. . . ." Freed from the necessity of developing self-restraint, the "personality of man," said Wilde, "will be as wonderful as the personality of a child."

The problem is that in a society where risks are shared socially but pleasure is, as with small children, purely individual, politics degenerates into a struggle to shift risks onto others while one continues to enjoy one's own benefits. And here we may learn that we have been freed from one set of social controls only to be delivered into another. The freedom to experiment with drugs was a product of the social freedom and/or license provided by the breakdown of the old moral/social order. But now it appears that older, largely informal constraints will be replaced by widespread drug

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testing as a response of those who wish to avoid the costs imposed upon them by drug users.

Similarly, as insurance costs rise, companies are monitoring the habits of employees with an eye to eliminating bad habits, which raise medical expenses. In these and other cases, such as attempts to reimpose surveillance on welfare mothers in the name of preventing child abuse, the tensions between the claims of privacy and free choice come into inevitable conflict not with social norms but with the costs imposed on other policyholders/taxpayers. The policyholders/taxpayers, although they no longer pass moral judgment, have an interest in limiting the financial costs they will have to bear.

The tension between the claims of individual rights and the medical costs imposed by the exercise of those rights is reshaping the politics of our largest states. In state after state, pro- and anti-abortion groups, each with their own lawyers and medical experts, struggle over who will pay for the exercise of abortion rights. The tobacco companies, who are battling medical insurers, have created coalitions with labor and minority groups in the name of "workers' rights." In these and numerous other examples state politics are inevitably drawn into the politics of risk as defined by the unholy triangle of trial lawyers, doctors, and insurance companies, the interest groups that both organize and profit from the distorted shadow welfare state.

Emerson may have screeched, "the state is a trick," but most Americans, their grousing aside, believe they can turn the trick on the state. They are *dependent individualists*—like the rugged farmers who live off crop insurance and the dashing motorcyclists free to ride without a helmet and with the right to have others pay the tab when they're banged up. Dependent individualism has, in a marriage of convenience, joined the consumerist and rights-based individualism of the 1920s with a debased version of the social insurance ideal of the 1930s. Its offspring is an easy mark: a government whose jurisdictional reach has been dramatically extended, but whose moral grasp recedes before the privatization of life. And since every state expresses the character of its citizens, it has also given us the kind of beggar-thy-neighbor politics likely to endure for some time to come.

For hardshell conservatives, the conclusion is clear—dismantle the welfare state and return to unfettered market individualism. That would be as reprehensible as it is implausible. It would only feed the fevers that threaten to consume American society. The mutuality and fraternity at the heart of the social democratic ethic are essential today as never before if America is to be saved from its own worst inclinations. □

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Michael Walzer

THE AMBIGUOUS LEGACY OF ANTONIO GRAMSCI

His is one of those lives that invites counter-factual questions. A founder of the Italian Communist party, a brilliant writer and devoted militant, Antonio Gramsci was imprisoned by the Fascists in 1926 when he was only 35 and died in a prison hospital eleven years later, in 1937, the middle year of the Moscow trials. In his *Prison Notebooks*—thousands of pages, to which thousands more pages of scholarly and political exegesis have now been added—Gramsci's focus was historical, his style reflective; he knew virtually nothing about what was happening outside his prison cell during the last decade of his life. The steady degeneration of international communism occurred, as it were, behind his back. Did Mussolini save him from Stalinist orthodoxy or deprive the left of a brave and supremely intelligent opponent of Stalinism? Had Gramsci been free in the 1930s, alive in the 1940s and 1950s, what would he have said? Where would he have stood when Ignazio Silone rejected party discipline and communist orthodoxy in 1929? Whom would he have supported in 1946 when Elio Vitorinni defended the intellectual freedom of communist militants against Gramsci's old friend and political successor Palmiro Togliatti? In more immediate terms, is Gramsci the secret ancestor, the silenced theorist of Eurocommunism (or even of Eurosocialism)? Or was he always a loyal Leninist, committed and likely to have remained committed to the dictatorship of the Central Committee?

Questions of this sort are obviously unanswerable, and yet they underlie and probably motivate the extraordinary outpouring of books and articles about Gramsci, not only in Italy but also, more recently, in Britain and France and even in the United States (though the interest here is more academic than political). Writers on the left seek, no doubt, to understand Gramsci; but they also seek to appropriate him. For he is a rare bird in the twentieth century—an *innocent communist*—and he didn't have to leave the party, but only to be found guilty in a fascist court, to preserve his innocence. Mostly, the appropriation of his work serves a good cause; it helps to legitimate democratic politics in a communist or far-left setting. Gramsci's years of antifascist struggle and then his prison years add up to a small piece of usable past, a counter-tradition to set against the long line of Leninist precedents. But is Gramsci in fact rather than counter-fact a democratic communist—as one might say of someone that he is a democratic socialist, meaning that he would not establish a socialist regime except with the consent of the people? In fact, I think, he isn't; his view of the role of the party and of the place of intellectuals like himself in political life is so profoundly ambiguous, so painfully unresolved, that it can't be given such an agreeable label. Gramsci is not committed to some abstract political "ideal" like freedom or justice or self-determination; he is committed to a doctrine, an integrated set of "scientific" arguments. And then he is committed to a group of people who figure in the arguments, whom he claims

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to understand scientifically and hopes to engage politically. All the problems of his work derive from the tense relation between the claim and the hope, understanding and engagement, Marxist science and working class politics.

Intellectuals and the War of Position

The committed intellectual is the central figure in Gramsci's version of Marxist doctrine. And it is specifically the intellectual's *intellectual* activity, his work as a philosopher and critic, that Gramsci values. Ever since Marx, every Marxist leader has had to prove himself as a theorist—for without a correct theory, how is it possible to act correctly in political life? The sole purpose of theory, the only reason to get it right, is political action, and action of a narrowly specific sort: the organization of the proletariat for the seizure of power. Gramsci must have held this Marxist view of intellectual purposefulness, at least during the brief years when he led the Italian Communists. Writing in prison, however, after the terrible defeats of the early 1920s, he argued for a significant shift in priorities. In the West, the seizure of power would come only after the creation of a new proletarian culture, and then it would come with relative ease, a short political or military engagement confirming the outcome of a long cultural struggle. Hence the task of the intellectual was not merely to act from a correct theory but to expound and elaborate a new view of the world.

Gramsci's great discovery was the density and complexity, the sheer sturdiness, of bourgeois civil society. In the developed capitalist countries, he argues, the state is the creation of the leading groups in civil society, the instrumental appendage of a hegemonic class and its immediate allies. State and class stand to one another in what Marxists have always regarded as the "proper relation." (Gramsci has little to say, hardly seems interested in, any further Marxist proprieties: the economic base, the relations of production, and so on.) Only in countries like Czarist Russia is the state "everything" and civil society "primordial and gelatinous," its classes underdeveloped, politically disorganized, incapable of controlling state power. In such conditions, a Leninist *coup d'état* is possible.[1] But nothing like that is possible in Italy (even less so in Britain or France) where the state is protected by what it is ostensibly designed to protect. The real bastion of bourgeois power is ordinary life. It is in everyday actions and relations, and even more importantly in the ideas and attitudes that lie behind these, that the hegemony of a social class is revealed. The state cannot be seized until that hegemony has been decisively overcome.

Gramsci distinguishes between a "war of maneuver" such as Lenin had fought in Russia and a "war of position," necessary in the more developed countries of the West. The first of these is literally and simply the seizure of state power—buildings, communications, police. The second is the "seizure" of civil society, which is neither literal nor simple, more like infiltration than takeover, a long and arduous cultural struggle, the new world slowly, painfully, displacing the old. The argument points toward a kind of communist Fabianism—more focused on the radio, the printing press, and the school, however, than on the municipal waterworks. And Gramsci has, sometimes, a Fabian optimism: "in politics," he says, "the 'war of position,' once won, is decisive definitively." So the French Revolution was won in the years of enlightenment, not in the more exciting days of insurrection. The process was crucial, not the "events."

Gramsci does not, however, take a passive or complacent view of this process. Here he marks himself off from (his own reading of) German and Austrian social democracy; he is a Leninist of the cultural struggle. The long process of enlightenment is indeed a war; it requires discipline, organization, constant militancy; it requires a structure of command and obedience; it requires a vanguard of intellectuals like himself, a Communist party. But if this military imagery testifies to Gramsci's radicalism, it doesn't quite do justice to his practical intentions. Nor is his comparison of the party to Machiavelli's prince immediately comprehensible: what is the life of the prince but an endless war of maneuver?

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Gramsci has something else in mind.

> The modern prince must be and cannot but be the proclaimer and organizer of an intellectual and moral reform . . . creating the terrain for a subsequent development of the national-popular . . . will towards the realization of a superior, total form of modern civilization.[2]

It is an awkward sentence because of the multiplication of forward-looking prepositions, adjectives, and nouns—as if Gramsci, sitting helplessly in Mussolini's prison, recognizes that a "superior" civilization is very far away. He seems to describe three stages in its development: (1) the party creates the terrain for (2) the development of a national-popular (*n.b.* not merely proletarian) will, which is not yet the achievement of but is only directed toward (3) the realization of a new way of life. In the *Notebooks*, Gramsci focuses mostly on the problems of the first stage. What did it mean, exactly, to create the terrain of a new popular wilfulness? And why did this require a disciplined political party? Why not, as in eighteenth-century France, a band of *philosophes*? Perhaps Gramsci confused these two, imagining a utopian vanguard, a disciplined army of free intellectuals.

The Problem of Common Sense

The task of the party is "intellectual and moral reform," where reform does not refer to an incremental politics in the style of central European social democracy but to something more like a religious reformation or a cultural revolution. Gramsci's Marxism requires him to believe that the content of this reform, its socialist or communist character, is historically given. The civilization of the future is carried, though not consciously carried, not carried aloft, by the industrial working class. It is revealed in the practical activity of the workers (cooperation in the factory, union solidarity) but not yet in their understanding of the world, not yet in what Gramsci calls their "common sense." So the party's reformation aims at raising the workers to the level of their own activity, "fitting culture to the sphere of practice."

Common sense is, I suppose, Gramsci's version of false consciousness. But it is far more subtle than the standard Marxist account repeated with hardly any embarrassment after every revolutionary failure. The standard account blames the victims: if only the workers knew their own interests! Gramsci falls easily enough into this style of reasoning, and Frank Parkin is not entirely unfair when he describes "a succession of Marxist theorists, from Lukács and Gramsci to the Althusserian and Frankfurt schools" whose diagnosis of revolutionary failure implies "in the most oblique and scholarly manner that the proletariat [is] suffering from a kind of collective brain damage."[3] Hence the need for the party, the undamaged brain of the working class, which defends the "real" interests of the workers with or without their participation. It has to be added, however, that Gramsci is not entirely content with this account. In the *Notebooks*, common sense is never a matter of interests alone; it includes ideas that are true as well as ideas that are false—and also ideas to which these predicates just don't apply, as they clearly don't apply to consciousness as a whole. What is at issue in the war of position is culture itself, from philosophy and religion down to the most ordinary understandings of health and sickness, love, marriage, work, exchange, honor, and solidarity. It is not so easy, then, for the party to impose its "correct" line and lead the political struggle. If it is an agent of intellectual and moral reform, it is an agent that can only work through, not behind the backs or over the heads of, the workers: it must change their understanding of the world before it can change the world. Or, more democratically, and Gramsci sometimes writes in this style too, it must help the workers educate and change themselves.

Gramsci's argument begins with the firmly egalitarian assertion that "All men are intellectuals. . . . There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*." Men and women cannot live, work, love, or raise children without coming to hold a view of the world, adopting and defending a line of moral

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conduct, sustaining or modifying a set of received ideas. *Received* ideas, for we do not start out, not the most brilliant philosophers among us, *ab novo*, with pure intuitions of Morality and Truth. Nor are our minds blank tablets on which the ruling class—or the party, if only it could get there first—writes out its instructions, the marks of a dominant ideology. Our consciousness is instead a historical composition, the product of a process that has "deposited" in us—this is Gramsci's best phrase—"an infinity of traces, without . . . an inventory." The sign of a hegemonic class is that its professional intellectuals are able to refine and reshape this composition, or at least to overlay it with a new "deposit," and to do so not only for their immediate students and readers but for society as a whole. They provide a high philosophy that is reiterated, though with much distortion, at every level of social and intellectual life. One gets then a strange break in the culture of subordinate classes. Their thinking does not reflect their practical activity; consciousness does not follow existence. This break, Gramsci argues in an important passage in the *Prison Notebooks*,

> signifies that the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception that manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes. . . . But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group, and it confirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it. . . .[4]

And does follow it, Gramsci goes on, in "normal times." In fact, however, the borrowing is incomplete; the borrowed ideas are combined with the fragments of earlier ideologies, and like them are adapted to the needs of a subordinate social setting. On the one hand, a practical activity that can't be articulated; on the other, the partial and disjointed articulation of inherited and borrowed ideas: this is what Gramsci means by common sense, the ordinary wisdom with which ordinary people negotiate their way in the world. "Common sense is the folklore of philosophy."

So Gramsci adapts and complicates Marx's dictum: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas. . . ." But his understanding of these "ruling ideas" is developed in political and cultural directions that few Marxists—until very recently anyway—have been willing to follow. He himself does not always pursue the hints and intimations of his own arguments, which point toward the replacement of political economy by a kind of cultural anthropology. These same arguments force upon the Marxist intellectual, face to face with the workers, struggling to understand and reform working class common sense, the standard anthropological dilemma: should he make a virtue of his distance from the workers or should he engage himself more immediately in their everyday life? Should he stand outside or should he accept the risks of "going native"?

The intellectual must choose distance or nearness, and in making this choice, two Gramscian arguments are crucial; unhappily, they point in different directions. The first of them is suggested but never worked out by Marx himself. Ruling ideas are always something more than rationalizations of class interest. "For each new class which puts itself in the place of the one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society. . . ." Gramsci elaborates on this suggestion: Ideas don't come to rule, he says, unless they are expressed in "universal" rather than "corporate" terms—and universality is never a mere pretense. Every hegemony is "national-popular" in character, even though its deepest values and organizing principles are determined by the way of life of a particular class. The visible organization of hegemony and the range of values it expresses are worked out through a complex political process; the result is something close to a common culture. Ruling intellectuals are armed with pens, not swords; they have to make a case for the ideas they are defending among men and women who have ideas of their own, who are intellectuals-of-everyday-life. Coercion has its place in (or alongside of) hegemony, but the power of

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ideas lies elsewhere, and hegemony is not possible without ideas. When a ruling class has to rely on force alone, it has reached a point of crisis in its rule. If it is to avoid that crisis it has to compromise:

> The fact of hegemony presupposes that one takes into account the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony will be exercised, and it also presupposes a certain equilibrium, that is to say that the hegemonic groups will make some sacrifices of a corporate nature.[5]

Parkin's joke about brain damage, then, misses Gramsci's most interesting point: when subordinate classes accept a view of the world that is at odds with their practical activity, they do so only because that view does allow, if only in a concessionary way, some scope for practical activity (if not for a full class consciousness). Ruling ideas internalize contradictions. It would seem to follow that Marxist intellectuals don't have to stand outside the world of culture and common sense in order to see the "real" interests of the working class. These interests have, if only in a partial way, been incorporated into the structures of hegemony. The workers have a place within the old society, subordinate but not entirely negative—not a mere absence of status and entitlement—and opposition properly starts from where they are.

Gramsci's second, and rather different, point derives from his general view of consciousness. Like common sense, ruling ideas extend well beyond "interests and tendencies." The ideas elaborated by bourgeois intellectuals embody not only the most powerful but also the most nearly true understanding of social reality (and, not insignificantly, of natural science). They reach to the most beautiful conceptions of art and literature; they incorporate classical humanism as well as bourgeois liberalism. They are, quite simply, the best ideas of the epoch (and of all previous epochs), and Marxism itself is continuous with them, the "consummation" of German philosophy, English economics, and French political science. The new civilization carried by the working class can be articulated only through the medium of these ideas. At this point, no sacrifices or concessions are called for. It is indeed a matter of some anxiety that cultural dominance is so radically incomplete. Ruling ideas rule directly and fully only among the rulers and the intellectuals. Among subordinate classes these ideas are nothing more than the last of the "infinity of traces," overlaying all the others but not displacing them. The common sense of the masses remains, to some significant if undetermined degree (there is no inventory), pre-bourgeois, a less than coherent amalgam of old prejudices, superstitions, and "utopias," which derive in their turn from previous ruling ideas, themselves never wholly understood or absorbed. And alongside all this, embryonically, there exist intimations of something radically new.

Or perhaps not so radically new: for these intimations also appear as "traces" in the ruling ideas. Because of the concessionary character of hegemony, or because of its scientific and "advanced" character, the civilization of the future can be anticipated by intellectuals like Marx or Gramsci, who grow up among, share the culture of, and then set themselves in opposition to, the ruling class. Unfortunately, they must also set themselves in opposition to the working class, at least insofar as the working class is shaped by its common sense. Though they hope for a new civilization, communist intellectuals are carriers of the old hegemony.

The Party and the Workers

This then is Gramsci's dilemma: his task is social criticism, but not a criticism aimed most importantly at the dominant groups or the prevailing injustices of the society in which he lives. He must take aim instead at the consciousness, the culture and way of life, of the very people he hopes to lead. He must criticize them without alienating himself from them; he must reform their "moral and intellectual life" without coercively imposing his own. He must make himself, Gramsci says, into a "new type of philosopher . . . a 'democratic philosopher' "—that is, one whose philosophy "is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment." A

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relationship, presumably, with other men and women whose practical activity (since they belong to a progressive social class) is already modifying the environment and who, at least dimly, know this to be so. But this is not by any means an easy democracy, for the knowledge of the people is indeed dim—not because *they* are dim, but because their cultural life is broken and out of joint—while that of the party intellectual is scientific and precise. The two stand to one another as master and pupils, by no means a relation of equality. Supposedly, the master takes his lead from his pupils, for his teaching is implicit in their lives. He is likely, nonetheless, to appear to them very much as an outsider, the bearer of a new and alien truth.

He appears as an outsider first of all because he is an outsider—in class terms, a stranger, unlikely to have grown up in a factory town or ever to have worked in a factory. "The proletariat as a class," Gramsci wrote in 1926, just before his arrest, "is poor in organizing elements, does not have and cannot form its own stratum of intellectuals except very slowly, very laboriously, and only after the conquest of State power." A grim view, especially in that last phrase, which suggests that throughout the long war of position the proletariat will be led by outsiders. Gramsci had argued differently some six or seven years earlier when the factory councils, Italy's soviets, were active in Turin and he was active in defense of the councils (by 1926, his politics consisted mostly of intra-party intrigue). He suggested then that the councils were little models of the proletarian state within which the creation of a new culture was already far advanced. Throughout his life he looked back to the councils as the characteristic form of working class organization and the crucial arena of working class education. In the councils, he wrote in 1919, the working class could "educate itself, gather experience, and acquire a responsible awareness of the duties incumbent upon classes that hold the power of the State."[6] It is less clear in the *Prison Notebooks* that he still believes in self-education. Perhaps he never really believed; there was always something schoolmasterish about Gramsci, and he seems to have held throughout his life both a stern conception of the tasks of the proletariat (those "incumbent" duties) and a low estimate of its members. They were not brain-damaged, but they were culturally retarded; backwardness was the practical consequence of subordination. Briefly, in 1919, in a moment of enthusiasm, he repudiated the role of "tutor." The *Notebooks*, it seems to me, are a sustained defense of exactly that role, reflecting the lessons Gramsci learned from the defeat of the councils and the triumph of fascism.

But the defense its not without its complexities: Gramsci wanted a tutorial party but also a party prepared to give way (not too soon!) to its own pupils. Along with Lenin he believed that "the role of the intelligentsia is to make special leaders from among the intelligentsia unnecessary." For the moment, however, nothing was more necessary than "special leaders."

> Critical self-consciousness means, historically and politically, the creation of an elite of intellectuals. A human mass does not "distinguish" itself, does not become independent in its own right without, in the widest sense, organizing itself; and there is no organization without intellectuals . . . without the theoretical aspect of the theory-practice nexus being distinguished concretely by the existence of a group of people "specialized" in [the] conceptual and philosophical elaboration of ideas.[7]

Since the working class doesn't produce such people from its own midst, they can only come from the body of "traditional intellectuals," recruited largely, like Gramsci himself, from the petty-bourgeoisie. But the orientation of these intellectuals toward the proletariat is awkward and unstable, and the philosophical elaboration of ideas appropriate to the proletariat is a process "full of contradictions, advances and retreats, dispersals and regroupings, in which the loyalty of the masses is often sorely tried." And yet, in the long war of position, the masses can only be loyal: "loyalty and discipline are the ways in which [they] participate . . . in the development of the cultural movement as a whole." For them, the war of position is a war *in* position. Like schoolchildren, they must learn to sit still while

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a somewhat unruly (and unreliable) group of teachers struggle to work out a proper curriculum.

The English editors of the *Prison Notebooks* assure us that when he uses the word "elite" Gramsci does not mean to associate himself with the reactionary school of "elitists," the followers of Pareto and Mosca. No doubt; but what exactly does he mean? "The process of development is tied," he writes, "to a dialectic between the intellectuals and the masses." This is the style of someone who isn't sure, or who means to avoid saying, exactly what he means. In fact, Gramsci faces real difficulties. The party intellectual must not get too close to the workers, lest he lose his ability to criticize their common sense. Romantic identification is a failure of nerve, and the support of proletarian spontaneity is a bad politics, very much like preferring folklore and superstition to modern science. On the other hand, rejecting proletarian spontaneity is also a bad politics, for every spontaneous movement "contains rudimentary elements of conscious leadership. . . ." And a refusal of identification is dangerous too for reasons that I have already suggested: it is the proletariat, after all, and not the bourgeois intelligentsia, in whose practical activity the civilization of the future is somehow implicit. "The socialist state already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited laboring class."

So the intellectual hovers uncertainly between the high culture of the old society, of which modern science and Marxism itself are the most advanced products, and the common sense of the people, the internalized form of their subordination (and their resistance to subordination), which simultaneously holds within itself intimations of a still higher culture. He wants to be a missionary and a comrade. As a missionary, he aims to bring art and science and "the philosophy of praxis" to the masses. His task is like that of the Gramscian teacher, who must commit himself to uproot "folklorist" conceptions of the world "and replace them with conceptions that are deemed superior."[8] As a comrade, he aims at an active union with the people, perhaps even at a "unity of manual and intellectual work" (something Gramsci himself never attempted and, given his health, probably could not have done), and then a transformation from within of working class common sense.

It is the purpose of the Communist party, of course, to mediate between these two conceptions. Ideally, the party brings together an elite of intellectuals and the "most advanced" sections of the proletariat in everyday political struggle. Education and action go hand in hand; the protagonists of the two learn from one another. The intellectual elite, governed by an egalitarian ethic, works closely with the intellectuals-of-everyday-life. Its members are critics of common sense, but they don't merely proclaim their own scientific truths. "Initially," at least, they base themselves "on common sense [itself] in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific mode of thought . . . but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity." Gramsci suggests a surprising model: the preaching friars of the Middle Ages, organized in religious orders that imposed an "iron discipline" on their members, not for conspiratorial purposes, but "so that they [would] not exceed certain limits of differentiation between themselves and the 'simple.' " When they move beyond such limits, intellectuals "become a caste or a priesthood."

But if Gramsci recognizes this danger—the lines just quoted may be intended as self-criticism—it is not clear what he means to do about it. In practice, the positions that his own party adopted in this or that political struggle were more often determined by external instructions from the popes and bishops of the Comintern than by the internal "dialectic" of theory and common sense. Nor was that dialectic ever as fruitful as Gramsci hoped it would be—and for reasons about which he is always brutally frank. The proletariat was terribly slow in producing suitably advanced elements. With few exceptions, the intellectu-

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als of the party were not "organic intellectuals" of the working class. They neither emerged from the class nor (except briefly, perhaps, at critical moments like the Turin strikes) integrated themselves within it. The party remained throughout the 1920s largely a missionary organization, whose members called one another comrades but were radically alienated from the workers whose comrades they hoped to be. The socialists achieved a much closer integration with the workers but only, Gramsci believed, opportunistically, by surrendering theory to common sense.

Perhaps the communist and socialist experiences exhaust the real possibilities: either missionary work from the outside by an elite of intellectuals or the creation of a mass party without a missionary elite and, soon enough, without a mission. There is an inexact but suggestive correspondence here to Julien Benda's famous dualism. The communist intellectuals are the "clerks," committed to truth or, at least, to the "correct ideological position," while the socialists are "laymen" acting, if mostly ineffectively, in the real world, adapting to circumstances and seeking allies through compromise (rather than conversion). Gramsci's persistent use of military and Machiavellian metaphors suggests how fiercely he wished to transcend this dualism—to be, as a good Marxist is supposed to be, at once a critical theorist and a tactician, a revolutionary leader and a preaching friar, a *clerk militant*. Given the war of position, however, tactics recede in importance (and in prison they cease entirely to be interesting). What is important now are the larger strategies of cultural criticism. Where is that criticism to come from?

If the workers really represent the culture of the future, then the socialists were right to think that it could only come from within, from the slow development of working class institutions, the slow elaboration of practical activity into a new culture.[9] The deepest argument for communist politics is the (Leninist) claim that this internal criticism and inner-class transformation are simply not possible. Hegemony can only be overthrown by expatriate bourgeois intellectuals, equipped with hegemonic knowledge. "Only after the creation of a new state does the cultural problem . . . tend toward a coherent solution." This argument from the *Notebooks* parallels the passage from 1926 that I have already discussed. Gramsci's meaning is clear: the working class won't produce its own organic intellectuals or its own culture until the work of the communist missionaries is backed up by the power of the state, until the party controls the media and the educational system. I have been using pedagogy as a metaphor for Gramscian politics. But Gramsci takes the metaphor seriously; he has a direct, personal as well as theoretical, interest in the school and the curriculum. Here he draws most explicitly upon his own experience and gives us, briefly, a glimpse of the inner life of a communist militant.

Communist Schooling

Some of Gramsci's earliest articles focused on educational issues, but his most systematic discussion comes in the *Prison Notebooks* where he criticizes a reform proposal drafted by the idealist philosopher Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini's minister of education. The details of the proposal need not concern us here; it was ostensibly "progressive," emphasizing something called "active education" as against mere "instruction," which was taken to be dry, formal, repetitive, and incapable of engaging the interests of the young. Gramsci's response is remarkably conservative:

> Latin and Greek were learnt through their grammar, mechanically; but the accusation of formalism and aridity is very unjust and inappropriate. In education one is dealing with children in whom one has to inculcate certain habits of diligence, precision, poise (even physical poise), ability to concentrate on specific subjects, which cannot be acquired without the mechanical repetition of disciplined and methodical acts.[10]

An education of this sort has, apparently, no specific class character; it is neither bourgeois nor (Gramsci's word) "oligarchic." The old schools in which Greek and Latin were taught were oligarchic only because of the exclusion of working-class children. Admit such children and the character of the school will change.

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Gramsci is an advocate of the "common" or "comprehensive" school—and at the same time of the traditional curriculum. Reluctantly, he agrees that it might be necessary to dispense with ancient languages, though he can muster no enthusiasm for this reform, widely advocated on the left. "It will not be easy to deploy new . . . subjects in a didactic form which gives equivalent results in terms of education and general personality formation."

The challenge of a genuinely progressive education is not to produce a new curriculum but to bring working class children (and peasant children too) into touch with what is best in literature and science. The school, like the party, has to stand in tension with the common sense of the people. Communists should not attempt to relieve this tension; they should insist upon it, live with it, fight it through until the defeat of common sense. The teacher, writes Gramsci,

> must be aware of the contrast between the type of culture and society which he represents and the type of culture and society represented by his pupils, and [he must be] conscious of his obligation to accelerate and regulate the child's formation in conformity with the former and *in conflict with the latter*.[11]

Education is always hard work; no one is born with diligence, precision, and poise. But given the character of the cultural conflict (the war of position) and the relative preparation of the two sides, it is much harder for the children of factory workers than for the children of "gentlemen." So be it, then: on this point Gramsci is uncompromising. "In the future these questions may become extremely acute, and it will be necessary to resist the tendency to render easy that which cannot become easy without being distorted."

It had not been easy for Gramsci himself, the son and grandson of provincial officials; it would be harder still for students from lower social strata. And yet it was the schools, the old curriculum, rote learning, and even the occasional assistance of largely incompetent teachers, he believed, that had carried him from the remote and backward province of Sardinia to modern Turin. Physically weak, often ill, a hunchback and near-dwarf, he had made his way, not without help. "Expect nothing from anyone," he wrote to his brother Carlo in 1927, "and you will avoid delusions." And yet his notes on education (his letters from prison, too, where he worries about the education of his son) are full of expectations. The school is, of course, an agent of hegemony, that is, it teaches "a responsible awareness of the duties incumbent upon classes that hold the power of the State." But it can do this as well for workers as for gentlemen—if only the workers were admitted to the schools. They won't be admitted, Gramsci argues, under the conditions of bourgeois rule, except to schools whose curriculum has been adapted to their supposed capacities and interests. And there they won't confront the hegemonic culture and learn the "responsible awareness" of a ruling class. The schools won't work for the workers until there is a workers' state. They suggest nonetheless, as Gramsci's own experience suggests, what needs to be done.

Gramsci's educational arguments are stern with a personal as well as an ideological sternness. His letters have the same tone. I can only speculate about its sources in his own life, but the speculation seems worthwhile; the dilemma of the Gramscian intellectual, after all, is ultimately a personal dilemma. I want to make a simple claim: that what Gramsci demanded of the workers is what he thought he had achieved himself. They must break as radically with the "Sardinia" of common sense as he had done with the actual Sardinia where he was born and raised. They must come to hate their "spiritual slavery" as he hated Sardinian backwardness. In Sardinia, he once wrote, he had known only "the most brutal aspect of life." The truth is that he had known something more: the first stirrings of revolt, sympathy with the oppressed, even solidarity—in the form of Sardinian patriotism, an emotion long repressed by the time he wrote the *Notebooks*.[12] But all that was inchoate feeling, closely tied to the local version of common sense, and it had to be, as Gramsci's English editors say, "transcended." So too with the

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common sense of the workers, even if it sometimes makes for a "rudimentary" solidarity.

At the same time, Gramsci worried about intellectual transcendence. Here is that worry expressed in theoretical terms (from the *Notebooks*):

> The popular element "feels" but does not know or understand; the intellectual element "knows" but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel. . . . The intellectual's error consists in believing that one can . . . be an intellectual (and not a pure pedant) if distinct and separate from the people-nation, that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them . . . and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated—i.e. knowledge.[13]

And here a similar worry expressed in personal terms: in a letter to his wife, Gramsci recalled a life (before he met her) without love, and confessed that he had often wondered whether "it was possible to tie myself to the mass of men when I [had] never loved anyone, not even my own family, [whether] it was possible to love a collectivity if I had never been loved deeply myself by individual human beings?" The unloved and self-pitying intellectual is a common enough figure, I suppose, and I don't want to focus on that but rather on the first of Gramsci's questions, which expresses his rejection of home and homeland. At great personal cost, he had broken loose. Could he now form comradely ties with men and women who had not broken loose, who embodied the backwardness he had transcended? With no feeling for his own past, how could he find fellow-feeling with men and women who still lived in that past?

It is at least an honest question, recalling Rousseau's contempt for philosophers who loved humanity and despised their nearest neighbors. Did Gramsci ever "love" the workers? It is a question I would hesitate to ask, at least in these terms, if Gramsci had not asked it himself. It's not a question addressed at all, so far as I know, in the vast Gramsci literature, whose authors are concerned almost exclusively with cultural life and Marxist theory. But the *Notebooks* do suggest an answer: he loved the workers only as a stern teacher might love a backward, recalcitrant, but somehow promising student. It's not the love of a brother or a friend. Gramsci must have expressed himself differently in face-to-face encounters, especially in the factories in 1919 and 1920. His style in the prison writings, however, is distant and demanding. Of course, he wants to feel the elementary passions of the workers, but he knows that he knows a superior doctrine.

What Gramsci demands is that the promising student give up his own "culture and society." This is the demand that the party makes upon the working class as a whole (though always with the caveat that the practical activity of the workers already represents a new culture and society, of which only the party intellectuals and a few "advanced" workers are fully aware). Can one ask this of adult men and women and still call oneself their comrade? Gramsci's educational program amounts to treating the workers as if they were immigrants to a foreign country, "greenhorns," as he himself had been when he first arrived in Turin. They have made the crucial move—into the modern factory—and they must now adapt themselves to, or let themselves be re-educated for, the new world they have entered. But a program like Gramsci's works best with children, that is, "after the creation of a new state" (and then it works, very much like "Americanization" in the early twentieth-century United States, largely through the public schools). It is more coercive and less attractive as a program for adults. Since Gramsci isn't a native of the new world, one might expect him to see the difficulty. In fact, having made the move and the adaptation, having repressed his own past, he seems all the more ready to lead others (to force others?) through the same process.

Gramsci's Doctrine

The completion of this process is the crucial requirement of the war of position. But I can best complete my own account of Gramsci's politics by looking at two descriptions (from

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the *Notebooks*) of wars of maneuver, that is, of actual revolutionary struggles. The first of these deals with the Bolsheviks, who maneuvered brilliantly and seized state power without ever having won a positional victory.

> An elite consisting of some of the most active, energetic, enterprising and disciplined members of the society emigrates abroad and assimilates the cultural and historical experiences of the most advanced countries of the West, without however losing the most essential characteristics of its own nationality, that is to say without breaking its sentimental and historical ties with its own people. Having thus performed its intellectual apprenticeship it returns to its own country and compels the people to an enforced awakening, skipping historical stages in the process.[14]

The reference to "sentimental ties" is necessary, I suppose, to explain why these enterprising intellectuals, having assimilated Western culture, don't just remain in the West. They see the sun but nevertheless go back to the cave. Except for two brief visits, Gramsci himself never went back to Sardinia, but perhaps his reiterated insistence that the Italian Communists address themselves to "the Southern question" is a gesture toward a return. If so, it is a gesture that studiously avoids sentimentality. Nor did the Bolsheviks ever allow their own sentimental ties to old Russia to interfere with the task they had set themselves: "to compel the people to an enforced awakening." The verb makes the adjective redundant, but the two together make the meaning of the sentence especially clear.

The second description deals with the French Revolution and the Jacobins, the revolutionary elite that Gramsci most admired, who led a class that had already won the war of position. The Jacobins, Gramsci writes, "made the demands of the popular mass their own" and then pursued those demands with "extreme energy, decisiveness and resolution. . . ." It wasn't only their energy, however, that made them an elite. Somehow, they represented future as well as present and actual demands: they "forced the hand" of the popular mass, though always "in the direction of real historical development" (much as a stern but devoted teacher forces a favorite student in the direction of his promise). Gramsci compresses the story he wants to tell into a single image when he describes the Jacobins as "a group of . . . determined men driving the bourgeoisie forward with kicks in the backside. . . ."

But this is a strange story, surely, for in the case of France enlightenment had preceded revolution; the bastions of civil society had been conquered, and there should have been no need to kick the triumphant middle classes along the path to their own hegemony. The chief reason for Gramsci's appeal to latter-day Marxists is his revaluation of civil society—which seems to open the way to a politics free from dictatorship and terror. Whatever the case in Russia, in the West the state won't be seized until a popular base has been established: a shared culture will soften and legitimate the exercise of power. That is indeed what Gramsci hoped for, but never saw his way clear to having. Even a class led by organic intellectuals, a powerful and self-enlightened class like the French bourgeoisie, scarcely dared to challenge the debilitated forces of aristocracy and absolutism. What then can one expect from the Italian workers, who are so "poor in organizing elements" and who cannot dispense with the leadership of expatriates like Gramsci? Would Gramsci have kicked the backsides of the workers? All we can say is that he never had the chance.

Gramsci's theoretical argument is deeply contradictory. He believes that in countries like Italy the cultural war of position will come before the political war of maneuver and will be "decisive definitively." And this positional victory ought to make coercion, at least coercion of the "popular mass," unnecessary. But he also believes that the war of position won't finally be won until after the seizure of power. Who then will maneuver to seize and hold the state? "A group of determined men," whose personal lives must be as contradictory as their theory: for they love and don't really love the people they coerce.

It is the gulf between elementary feeling and common sense, on the one hand, and Gramsci's own absolute knowledge, on the other, that generates these contradictions. They rise out of the void between the people and the intel-

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lectuals, a vast space that even the dialectic can't bridge. Gramsci wants to be a "democratic philosopher," and his account of hegemony, had he fully worked it out, might well provide the ground on which democratic philosophers could stand. Certainly no communist theorist comes closer than Gramsci in his prison cell to a revolutionary strategy that fits, or might be fitted to, the norms of a functioning democracy. For he suggests that the servants of hegemony necessarily create, by incorporation and concession, a common culture, assimilating to their own "ideological complex" the interests and values of subordinate groups. Subordinated men and women need not be described, then, as wholly unaware of the meaning of their own practical activity, ideologically shaped by borrowed ideas: they have, after all, extracted the concessions. Criticism can come from within, and they themselves can be subjects as well as objects of critical activity.

Criticism of this sort "makes possible," writes Gramsci, "a process of differentiation and change in the relative weight that the elements of the old ideologies used to possess. What was previously secondary and subordinate . . . is now taken to be primary and becomes the nucleus of a new ideological and theoretical complex." This is abstractly stated and without illustration in the text; it lacks the concreteness and intensity that Gramsci brings to the themes of backwardness and hegemony. But the point is important. Moral and intellectual reform begins with inner-hegemonic struggle, and the new culture is never wholly new; it is in large part a rearrangement of ideas already present in the old. Think, for example, of the place of equality in bourgeois and oppositional thought. Equality is a real but distinctly limited value in the hegemonic culture, but it also has larger, "utopian" meanings at least occasionally invoked by ruling intellectuals, if only as a concession to subordinate groups. So it is more generally available, a contested or contestable value—and the war of position is the name of the contest. Why shouldn't Marxist intellectuals participate in this war as real comrades, democratic philosophers, identifying simultaneously with ideas that are "secondary and subordinate" in the cultural system and with men and women who are "secondary and subordinate" in the social structure? But Gramsci never quite manages this broad and generous identification; he is the proud defender of "advanced" ideas, and he identifies only with the "advanced" members of subordinate classes.

Gramsci is a victim, we might say, of Marxist teleology. Advancement is the form of his detachment, and it is a bar to a comradely politics. The more advanced his theory, the more detached he is in practice from working class backwardness. His political activity is an irregular movement toward and then away from the people he hopes to lead. He knows that he can't lead them without their consent, but he also knows, and this time with a "scientifically and coherently elaborated" knowledge, that they ought to consent, and in the course of "real historical development" will consent, to his leadership. This is the knowledge he won when he left Sardinia behind, and it makes him a self-confident and, in his own eyes, an objective critic of common sense. But objectivity has a price, which Gramsci also acknowledges: "the intellectual element 'knows' but does not always understand. . . ." And without understanding, criticism and leadership are alike corrupted.

His imprisonment saved Gramsci from the practical consequences of this corruption—or from the practical need to save himself. In prison, with admirable courage and extraordinary physical and mental discipline, he wrestled with the dilemmas of intellectual militancy. He did not resolve those dilemmas, not for himself, not for us. He never gave up his commitment to the party and to the true doctrine that it embodied. He never ceased to hope that the war of position, led by the party, could nevertheless be a democratic war. It's not, I suppose, an impossible dream: the vanguard connected to the rearguard, not with the coerciveness of steel but with persuasive words. An intellectual's dream—endangered, though, by an intellectual's confidence that when he marched, he always marched at the head of the line. □

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Notes

[1] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (henceforth, *PN*), Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, ed. and trans. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 238. This selection has established the authoritative text for English-speaking Gramscians; it is well introduced and helpfully annotated; but Hoare and Smith tell their readers nothing about their principles of selection. What have they left out, and why?

[2] *PN*, pp. 132–3.

Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 81.

[4] *PN*, p. 327; cf. p. 333 on the "contradictory consciousness" of ordinary people.

[5] Quoted in Chantal Mouffe, "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci," in Mouffe, ed., *Gramsci and Marxist Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 181—in my view the best account of what Gramsci might have meant by "hegemony."

[6] Quoted in John Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 78. On the Turin years, see also Martin Clark, *Antonio Gramsci and the Revolution that Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) and Gwyn Williams, *Proletarian Order: Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils and the Origins of Communism in Italy, 1911–1921* (London: Pluto Press, 1980).

[7] *PN*, p. 334.

[8] Quoted in Harold Entwistle, *Antonio Gramsci: Conservative Schooling for Radical Politics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 72. This is an extremely useful book, which breaks loose from some of the pieties of contemporary Gramscians.

[9] Or, alternatively, the slow elaboration of cultural activity into a new practice: this is the line taken by contemporary followers of Gramsci who have broken decisively, as he never did, with vanguard politics and who tend to assign a greater value to popular culture.

[10] *PN*, p. 37.

[11] *PN*, pp. 35–36. The "character" of a party member, Gramsci wrote, is revealed by his "resistance to the pressures of surpassed cultures." *PN*, p. 268.

[12] Alastair Davidson, *Antonio Gramsci: Toward an Intellectual Biography* (London: Merlin Press, 1977), provides a good account of Gramsci's Sardinian years.

[13] *PN*, p. 418.

[14] *PN*, pp. 19–20.

To Our Contributors:

A few suggestions:

(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your ms—the mails aren't always reliable. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility. No dot matrix submissions, *please*.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print.

THE EDITORS □

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Meredith Tax

THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING

Women's Liberation and the Left

I first made contact with the women's liberation movement twenty years ago, in the fall of 1968, when Linda Gordon showed me a copy of a magazine called *No More Fun and Games,* put out by an organization called Cell 16. *No More Fun and Games* had a message that was entirely new to me, though it resonated through my subconscious like a bell to which I was already tuned. Its voice was angry, raw, and full of pain, combined with a kind of bitter triumph at seeing the situation for what it was. I fell in love with the voice of women's liberation, and for all its occasional stridency love it still.

I am not talking about the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW had been around since 1966, but nobody I knew belonged to it. My friends and I thought of it as an organization for people our mothers' age, who lived in places like Brookline, where we never went. We were movement girls, not career women; NOW's demands and organizational style weren't radical enough for us. We wanted to build a just society, not get a bigger slice of the pie. Besides, we were generational sectarians; we didn't trust anybody over thirty.

Cell 16, a radical feminist cadre group led by Roxanne Dunbar, was more interesting, but we had disagreements with its program, which combined theoretical work with karate. Cell 16 directed its main attack on the nuclear family, calling upon women to leave their husbands and children and live celibate lives in feminist collectives. Although parts of its analysis were compelling, many of us felt that its program had limited appeal. We were interested in building a mass movement, not joining a cell.

So, in the summer of 1969, Linda, I, and some others sent out a call saying, more or less, "Women who feel ugly, stupid, oppressed—come to a meeting." The room could hardly hold them all. We held another meeting. More women came. We divided into small groups, mainly on the basis of friendship networks and neighborhood, though some groups were organized around a common interest or need, like starting a day-care center or an abortion campaign or doing media work. All the small groups were linked by an umbrella organization, which we called Bread & Roses after an early women's union song.

We saw ourselves as building an autonomous movement rather than a separatist one. We were very proud of this distinction, by which we meant we would work mainly on the oppression of women, but would combine this with work against the war, racism, and the class system. We were socialists or anarchists and, like many movement people at the time, we thought The Revolution was more or less imminent. But we didn't know what that meant in relation to women.

Because many of us were intellectuals, we went to the library to find out. But the more we studied, the less we seemed to know: women's history seemed one vast blank page. Most of the histories in the library had titles like *Great Queens and Empresses.** We came to realize that this didn't mean there had been no women's history; it meant no one had thought

* Notable exceptions include Eleanor Flexner's *Century of Struggle* (New York, 1959) and Aileen Kraditor's *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890–1925* (New York, 1965).

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it important enough to preserve. One result was that a number of us became historians.

Around the same time that Bread & Roses developed in Boston, similar organizations sprang up elsewhere, all quite spontaneously. There wasn't any central committee; there weren't any traveling organizers; there wasn't any money. Women would read a manifesto written in another city or hear a speech by someone and form a group. Often the groups had no clear organizational structure or principles of unity.

Bread & Roses never wrote down what it stood for; consequently it attracted many women who weren't socialists. In those early years, all you had to do was hang out a shingle that said Women's Liberation and they would beat down the door. We tried to develop a program, but we had no idea how to do it. All we came up with was an enormous laundry list of demands coupled with a utopian vision.

Of course, we didn't know how to do anything we were doing; we were making it up as we went along. Some of us had political experience—red-diaper babies and women from the Civil Rights movement or Harvard-Radcliffe SDS. But they had experienced Marxism mostly as a style of parental or male domination; they thus had strong antileadership and antistructure prejudices. Others, like me, were new to politics and had never studied any theory. My ideas about organization, which favored structure, came out of "common sense," what would work and what wouldn't. I kept trying to get people to develop a strategy. It was like asking a small group of friends to develop the atom bomb: We didn't have a clue.

A lot of my push for a strategy came from a hunger for organizational coherence and a rational division of labor, so that I wouldn't have to feel personally responsible for everything. My phone number had gone out on the national grapevine as a Bread & Roses contact number, and for two years my phone didn't stop ringing. I developed an aversion to the instrument that stays with me to this day.

Bread & Roses had no elected or appointed leaders. Of course people took leadership; they always do; but sentiment against this was strong, so they had to be very diffident about it. This often meant their creativity was stifled and things didn't get done that should have. It also meant our organization, unlike SDS, did not produce any mini-Stalins.

We tried to develop theory by wringing it out of our own experience. It is difficult to draw theory from your own experience. If you have had a wide experience, are creative and intelligent, and have a lot of help from friends, you may produce things of lasting value. Often these conditions do not apply. At our worst, we produced a fair amount of subjectivist, self-serving rubbish, class-bound, race-bound, characterized by a massive ignorance of most of the world. At our best, we changed our readers' lives. And at least we talked in ordinary language, not Marxist or Gueverist jargon; in 1970, that was enough to make us remarkable.

Bread & Roses lasted three or four years; the date of its final demise is unclear. During that period we accomplished a great deal. We held large and spirited demonstrations, produced a significant pamphlet literature, some of which is still being read, developed a cadre of activist intellectuals that has had considerable influence on the women's movement as a whole, gave birth to the collective that went on to write *Our Bodies, Ourselves,* a best-selling sex education manual, had influence on educational policy at all levels, and reached hundreds of women. But we couldn't get ourselves organized.

All the good things about Bread and Roses took place in the small groups we called collectives; these focused on personal-political discussions and theory. We also had big meetings every two weeks to deal with questions affecting the whole organization. These big meetings were bloody hell: a hundred people and no chair, on principle. People would sit there, not knowing how to begin, with their hands raised. Finally somebody, often me, would begin to call on them in sheer exasperation.

Inevitably, most of the real decision making got done informally, outside of these meetings, leading to a feeling of exclusion and resentment on the part of the majority and a feeling of overwhelming responsibility on the part of the informal leadership. I learned all about anarchism in practice in Bread & Roses; the experience made me into a Leninist for a while.

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One Hand Clapping

In 1971, I worked with a group of women for months in a last-ditch attempt to pull together some program for Bread & Roses. But we didn't know how to focus our thinking and the conference we called to discuss our ideas was a shambles. I was in despair. I felt responsible for world history and didn't know how to make things come out right.

How could I find out? Could anybody teach me what I needed to know? I had to study. I immersed myself in Marxism, Leninism, and the writings of Mao Tse-Tung, hoping to learn how to organize in a way that would work. By a progression that seemed inevitable, the books led me from Boston to Chicago, where I worked in factories and hospitals, joined a Marxist-Leninist organization now defunct, learned a lot, and was finally expelled for a large number of deviations. The feminist spots on my politics would not come out, no matter how hard I scrubbed.

My story has much in common with that of other women, past and present, who tried to raise women's liberation issues within a socialist or Leninist context.* A pattern of male repression, exclusion, devaluation and just not getting the point runs like a thread through the history of the left. With few important exceptions, left-wing movements have been overwhelmingly led and controlled by men and serviced by women: men making speeches, women making coffee. As a result, our hundred-odd years of socialist history is lopsided, reflecting the ideas, history, and experience of only half the species.

Within left-wing organizations, the "woman question," as Leninists quaintly call it, is commonly treated as a petty-bourgeois diversion from the class struggle, its concerns trivial items to be placed on the bottom of an agenda and skipped for lack of time. Women who try to stimulate discussion of it are normally encouraged to turn their attention to more important matters. If they persist, their political stand is called into question: "Do you think the concerns of petty-bourgeois women are more important than the exploitation of the working class, the crisis of imperialism, the black struggle?" Or the offender may be assigned to the organization's Women's Commission, in which case her status is bound to suffer—for, in the socialist tradition, comrades assigned to the Women's Commission are usually those considered incapable of anything important.

The socialist movement has paid the price for such stupidity. Its theory does not accurately describe the world and its practice does not prefigure any future society most of us would want to belong to. No wonder it has reached an impasse. How could a theory and practice based—at best—on the experience of only half the human race possibly be adequate?

Take, for instance, the treatment of women's popular movements in both theory and practice. Because these movements do not fit in with Marxist theory, they are usually ignored. Classical theory teaches that the working class begins organizing at the point of production, moving from labor unions to a political party and from economic questions to political ones.

"What's for dinner?" is also an economic question, but it has seldom entered the realm of Marxist theory, because dinner is the province of women. And who, indeed, was it that lined up in front of butcher shops in Poland, complaining year after year about the lack of meat? And what role did these market queues play in the growing number of strikes, broader campaigns for workers' control, and eventual links made between workers and intellectuals that became Solidarity? It's hard to tell from analyses that treat women in queues as an abstract economic precondition.

There is a wealth of evidence to demonstrate that women who go to the marketplace, trying to feed their families, can be a key element in revolutionary situations. Like the women who couldn't buy any bread, so they ganged up and marched to Versailles in 1789 to get "the baker and his wife," transforming the French Revolution in the process. Or the similar crowd who kicked off the Russian Revolution in February 1917. From Crossroads in South Africa to the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina to Love Canal, popular women's movements have arisen when

* There is substantial literature on this problem. See Mari Jo Buhle's *Woman and American Socialism, 1870–1920* (Urbana, 1981) and my *The Rising of the Women* (Monthly Review Press, 1980).

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a political crisis has had some disastrous effect on family life. Yet who has attempted to chart the place of such movements in forming revolutionary consciousness and building toward mass mobilization?* The scarcity of literature on this subject is a testament to the onesidedness of the socialist tradition.

Let us for a moment forget the classical Marxist picture of male workers engaged in socialized labor in the factories, while their wives remain in the semifeudal bastion of the privatized home, a drag on their developing consciousness. Let us imagine instead a working-class marketplace in some major city—Paris, Barcelona, New York. Hundreds of women come there every day, dragging their children, to buy meat or fish, dairy products, vegetables and bread. They never have the money to buy all they want, but they make do. When times get worse, they have to cut back—leave out milk and protein, concentrate on starch and vegetables. Finally times become so hard they cannot buy even enough bread to feed their families. Perhaps there is no bread available. The children are starving.

What do they do? What will happen to the working class in this crisis? According to the theory that tells us class consciousness develops in the workplace, nothing, until the men organize a union and strike for a higher family wage, or the women and children go out to work. In fact, what often happens in a real subsistence crisis is that the women go to the marketplace, mill around, talk, get riled up, and start a free-for-all with peddlers or distributors, or a march on the city government. They aim their protest not at the factory, the place of origin of the family wage, but at the marketplace, where they do much of their own work. And in situations of prolonged crisis—like France in 1789 or Poland in the late 1970s—their consumer protest may lead to much more.

If the working class, as represented by its women, has developed a form of militant response to economic and social crisis that has repeated itself time and again, and socialist theory continually ignores it, that theory has been blinded by sexism. An understanding of when and how women mobilize must become a central part of our view of the working class and social change. If we knew more about how such mobilizations actually work, perhaps we could help them last longer and link up to other movements. A socialist movement that gave women equal weight might even make the details of food, shelter, education, reproduction, and the welfare of children central to its program, rather than seeing them as part of the "superstructure."

Our socialist theory and history have not done this. Their development has been so profoundly gendered, it has been crippled by one-sidedness. The famous Zen riddle asks, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" It is the sound we have been hearing for the last hundred years.

Gendered Thinking

Although all thinking is gendered, male thinking has ordered the ways we learn to think about politics. Socialist history can be used to illustrate all the criticisms feminists habitually make of male practice: its lack of attention to people's personal needs, excessive abstraction, and preoccupation with seizing power even if that means one must, in Brecht's phrase, "embrace the butcher."

But feminist thought is equally gendered. My capsule history of Bread & Roses could be used to illustrate all the traditional socialist criticisms of "backward" women who refuse to look beyond their own noses, personalize everything, and cannot think abstractly. Reacting to left-wing theorizing that was detached from real life, we scorned abstraction and tried to draw everything from direct experience. In the process, we crippled ourselves. After all, abstract thought—combined with much experience and investigation—gave us the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and the *Communist Manifesto*.

* The main analytic work on women's popular movements has been done by Temma Kaplan; see her "Female Consciousness and Collective Action," *Signs*, Spring 1982; "Women and Communal Strikes in the Crisis of 1917 to 1922," in *Becoming Visible*, 2nd edition, edited by Renate Bridenthal, Claudia Koonz, and Susan Stuard (Boston, 1987); and the forthcoming "Community and Resistance: Women's Political Cultures in Historical Perspective." See also Vol. II, No. 3 (Fall 1987) of the *Barnard Occasional Papers on Women's Issues*, published by the Barnard Center for Research on Women, directed by Kaplan.

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The gendered character of the thinking and practice of the women's liberation movement determined both its strengths and weaknesses. Our strengths were drawing theory from real everyday experience; a basic democratic spirit that tried to avoid hierarchical relations inside our organizations; a commitment to involving more and more people; and a willingness to let different ideas and styles of work coexist—sometimes even seeing that diversity as a strength. These strengths gave women's liberation great influence. We changed the way of thinking and living of millions of people, at least in the West, even though we had little real organization and most of our leaders were media-appointed spokeswomen.

Our weaknesses were the flip side of our strengths. We had no strategy. Our theory was either so nitty gritty it couldn't get up to the strategic level, or so highfalutin and academic it floated above it. Our organizations lasted five minutes. We didn't know how to keep them going, partly because no one would take the long-term responsibility to keep things together. In the organizations I've been in, people fought to avoid power, not to get it. They didn't have the time or money to be leaders, or the social support. Or maybe the guts. It's not easy to be a leader in a movement that hates leaders.

Female political culture (by this I mean the ways most women are comfortable thinking and working together) got us into a box we couldn't think ourselves out of. We said revolution meant the transfer of power from one class to another, but we were terrified of power. To us, power meant oppression; we knew what it felt like to be the object of other people's power and we couldn't stand the thought of acting like bosses or fathers and being hated.

So, instead of developing strategies, we had fantasies of the future society. In these fantasies, nobody had power; everything was shared or dispersed. Society was the Peaceable Kingdom, with lots of individuals and little groups going about their business making useful things, being nice to each other.

This makes an interesting contrast to the most potent male political fantasy, Lenin's, where power is concentrated rather than dispersed and the party becomes a perfectly functioning machine with one mind and one will. Both fantasies represent extremes of gendered thinking. How could anybody believe that building a human machine would bring liberation? And how could anyone think fleeing conflict and avoiding power would change the world? These are not rounded, developed political strategies rooted in the experience of both men and women, but fantasies—reactive, lopsided dreams of power or antipower, reflecting centuries of deformed gender arrangements.

Three Themes

Certain themes arose in the women's liberation movement that have something in common with various other women's movements of the past and present. When we know as much about women's popular movements as we do about feminism, we will be able to see whether these themes are, as I suspect, basic threads that run through women's political culture.

One is equality and/or recognition for women and her work. Usually that has meant extending the rights of man to women. This may include taking measures to make their situations more equivalent. Though there is a healthy dose of bourgeois individualism inherent in the rights of man, rather than interpreting this selfishly, classical feminism has emphasized the social utility of individual contributions. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's essay "The Solitude of Self" stresses the radical isolation and uniqueness of every human soul, concluding that each of us must fight to develop her own political ideas and give them shape, for we can never be sure anyone else has exactly the same ones.

The emphasis is very different in the Marxist tradition, which devalues subjectivity and avoids the personal voice, characteristically attacking "bourgeois individualism" and exalting collective wisdom. In practice, this has often meant combining leadership cults with the slavishness of the beehive. Why one extreme or the other? Doesn't Stanton's dream amount to Marx's idea that the free development of each can be the free development of all? Perhaps a less distorted political culture could develop an idea of socialist individual-

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ism, where the individual and society are in a dialectical relationship.

From the time of *Lysistrata* and *The Trojan Women,* peace has been a second theme in women's political culture. Women's movements have often, though not always, opposed war; this is another area where they diverge from both the dominant culture and the Marxist left. In 1915, while most socialists were voting for war credits, women from all over the world, including the belligerent countries, ran the blockade to meet in the Hague for an international peace conference, three years before Zimmerwald. Lenin criticized these women because they were not class-conscious and anti-imperialist. We don't oppose war per se, he said; we want to turn the imperialist war into a civil war.

The feminists at the 1915 peace conference suffered from gendered thinking in the opposite direction, believing that women, as mothers, were innately pacifist and would rise up to oppose the war. But, whatever their lack of realism, the women pacifists saw that World War I was fundamentally wrong and antilife, as well as crudely macho. And they had the guts to risk their lives to try to stop it.

A third theme in women's political culture is that of creating alternative social spaces or liberated territories: buildings or plazas or neighborhoods that embody a culture of resistance.* Such free spaces can become symbols of enormous weight and poignancy: the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, where Argentinian women came to demand an accounting for their "disappeared" children, became a symbol of their indomitable perseverance, as well as a concrete place where they made contact with and recognized one another.

In our own daily life, alternative social spaces are more mundane: institutions like settlement houses, experimental schools, and battered women's shelters. But in the right hands, even a City College classroom can become a community of resistance, freeing its citizens in ways not intended by the powers-that-be. Because alternative institutions have a strong component of do-gooding and social service, Marxists have sometimes opposed them, fearing small escape valves that might defuse revolutionary sentiment. But these social spaces do not buy people off. They help them become more human, even if only for a few weeks, or a few hours a week. Certainly it is preferable to live humanely all the time, but most people find this impossible under capitalism. It is better to have some practice doing it than none at all.

When I first became a socialist, I assumed that people in the movement would be good people; they would treat each other with respect and solicitude, and differ in every way from the moral norm. After all, if socialism's human relations were no better than capitalism's, why bother? In the years that followed, I met few people who lived up to this dream; many held it in their hearts, but became impatient and tired, as I did myself. It was hard to reconcile making a life—the pulls of job and family—with stopping even a few of the horrors around us, let alone changing the world. Visionary language dropped out of socialist discourse, which became bitter, defensive, and flat.

The socialist movement can't get on without the dream and language of transformation, applied to job and family as well as international politics. Socialism needs the ability to dream as much as women's liberation needs the ability to think strategically. Only by creating a political culture that is not split down the middle by gender, can any of us find the answers we need to change the world. □

* In her ground-breaking *Personal Politics* (New York: 1979), Sara Evans explored this theme in relation to the women's liberation movement, positing as a precondition for any movement "social spaces within which members of an oppressed group can develop an independent sense of worth in contrast to their received definitions as second-class or inferior citizens."

This paper is an expanded version of one given at a conference on the crisis of modernity organized by the *Fundacion Pablo Iglesias* in Madrid in May 1985.

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George Konrad

TO CAVE EXPLORERS FROM THE WEST

Some Words of Advice from Hungary

I have been living in Budapest for decades now, but I wouldn't dare to say that I know the city. Everyone there seems to know something that I don't. Simply looking at other people is enough to make me feel that I am just one of many passers-by.

The newcomer, who has spent less than a month in Budapest and is already writing a book about it, may think that our city is an open-and-shut case. He hurries along to the next—to Prague, let's say, or Cracow—in order to dash off the same description there, so that the latest cliché about Central Europe may emerge.

But that quality that we generally call "Western" is, for all its advantages, the price we pay for the hasty cliché. Economical use of time carries with it a harmless superficiality. To create an "authentic account," all one need do is add a touch of local color to the stereotypes of journalism.

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The Westerner who travels in East Central Europe also travels through his own wartime past. There are the shortages of wartime, there is the whiff of danger, the romantic accounts about how good people get into trouble because they are good.

But there is a longing, a bitter sense of deprivation, that the citizen of the West has never experienced. So too a sense of being subject to the powers-that-be which the writer in the West has never felt. There is a tight barrier that is all but impossible to break. Literature is one attempt at breaking out.

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For mutual understanding, tolerance is not enough; one also needs complicity. For an understanding of Central Europe an excursion is not enough. We can share our experience only by living it together.

As a Hungarian, for whom life has been a little easier than for our neighbors, I have played the role of an "American Uncle." After a short while, I realized that I was a caricature.

I do not assert that a person is better simply because his lot is hard. But neither do I believe that a person is better because his burden is light.

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Our burden is the state; the Westerner's is the voluntarily adopted cliché of majority rule. Our burden seems to us the more oppressive. There are those who console themselves with the idea that the palm tree grows taller under a weight. Who knows? In any case, all of us are deformed by our civilization.

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We do not live in the delirium of change. It is not our experience that everything has undergone a dizzying transformation. We find,

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instead, that the essentials are permanent: homes, friendships, the basic questions.

Much has changed in our lives, but many things on the surface. The deeper beneath the surface we go, the more illusory the change.

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We are the needy relatives, we are the aborigines, we are the ones left behind—the backward, the stunted, the misshapen, the down-and-out, the moochers, parasites, conmen, suckers. Sentimental, old-fashioned, childish, uninformed, troubled, melodramatic, devious, unpredictable, negligent. The ones who don't answer letters, the ones who miss the great opportunity, the hard drinkers, the babblers, the porch-sitters, the deadline-missers, the promise-breakers, the braggarts, the immature, the monstrous, the undisciplined, the easily offended, the ones who insult each other to death but cannot break off relations. We are the maladjusted, the complainers intoxicated by failure.

We are irritating, excessive, depressing, somehow unlucky. People are accustomed to slight us. We are cheap labor; merchandise may be had from us at a lower price; people bring us their old newspapers as a gift. Letters from us come sloppily typed, unnecessarily detailed. People smile at us, pityingly, as long as we do not suddenly become unpleasant.

As long as we do not say anything strange, sharp; as long as we do not stare at our nails and bare our teeth; as long as we do not become wild and cynical.

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We are sometimes more than normal, sometimes less. Not for us reliable, wise mediocrity, the clear-cut, consistent principles of life: prudence, thrift, attention to detail, precision, the painstaking accumulation of successes. For us, something else.

Come and visit, Western observer, but leave here in time. It may happen that you will become involved in something, and then it will be painful to tear yourself away if you wish to return to reality. This dream is oppressive and yet alluring. Everything in it is wretched, yes, but for some reason you feel at home here, and, what is more, there is food for thought if you make friends with the natives. Our life is crazier, more extravagant, but richer than the one from which you have come. Be careful, or you will become entangled here. The soil of this motherland, one can sink into it like mud.

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The nature of the writing profession is such that before one sits down at one's desk, one must leave one's identity on the coat rack in the front hall. And one must slough off the stereotypes of one's environment. Above the clouds, the sun is always shining; that is where we meet.

Down here, this miserable self-pity—both individual and collective—interferes with thought, with our ability to see ourselves objectively. We are treated badly; we report this in various ways, or we report this in one voice. So we are treated badly. What can one conclude from this? History smiles on some and not on others. The fortunate sometimes feel an instinctive aversion to the unfortunate.

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In Central Europe, in the twentieth century—which began with World War I—it is not unimaginable, not even particularly surprising, for you to find, opening your eyes in bed one morning, as in a scene from a Kafka novel, that two strange men are standing next to your bed and telling you that you are under arrest.

It's no use resisting; you cannot avoid this persecution. They isolate you, bug your room, break you down, lock you in—and worse. The criminal trial is typical Central European theater. It shows that a person is helpless against others, against a faceless power. You assert your rights, but that only makes the situation worse. If you want to improve the system, you must accept with humility that you are guilty and that the authorities are right. It is wiser to throw yourself on their mercy than to insist with increasing desperation that you are innocent.

Seeing that a human being, from birth, is sentenced to death, it is not so difficult to

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accept that any misfortune is permanent and irrevocable. The blow falls, and it wears a human face.

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For the most part, Central European writers do battle, using words, with this powerful, incalculable force that dwells among us, a force that demands conformity and punishes truth-telling. There are those who hide their manuscripts; there are those who disguise their thoughts.

So that he will not be silenced, a writer remains silent—or he will be silent in many words, to avoid the unpleasantness writers face if they actually say something.

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The Western observer marvels how widespread ridicule of the state is here, although the ridiculers are all, in one way or another, people of the state, if for no other reason than that they are its hostages. In conducting their lives, they can never forget the presence of the state, its prying eye. Nor can they remove the state from their thoughts of the future.

We live in symbiosis with the state, by virtue of the fact that we live in East Central Europe, where the majority of public people have taken a vow that they will neither speak nor write on certain subjects.

This vow demands the use of a special state language, a language designed to create a generation of writers who do not reach adulthood. By this I mean people who, while writing, keep an eye on what is permitted and what is not. The most advanced form of such obedience is when a subject, being forbidden, does not even enter the author's mind.

Such enforced adolescence produces resentment, the longing to retire into a cave, to make that cave a labyrinth.

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How would we view our literature, if, by the touch of a magic wand, freedom of the press sprang from the soil? If suddenly no courage or morality was needed to write the truth?

A new era of history would dawn if the events in Hungary of 1956 could be called, in the press, a "revolution" by those who feel it was a revolution, and a "counterrevolution" by those who feel it was a counterrevolution.

In this improbable utopian situation our present literature would seem unnecessarily subtle and windy. It would be like emerging from a communal neurosis. We would exclaim, amazed: What on earth was this complicated nonsense we were working on?

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But does not art benefit from subtlety and concealment? No doubt. The tension between speaking out and not speaking out is beneficial for art. One can jump heroically head-first from our world of cryptic language only into mere journalism.

Miracles in literature still happen. Success comes not to the majority but to a few. There is no formula for it. Even extraordinary talent cannot explain it; there are so many other factors. One genius goes to ruin, another does not.

It may be that our constant soul-searching is the most valuable thing. Daily, we tear apart and cross-examine our every belief and borrowed idea. Our obsession is to put everything into question. Since writing is a dangerous enterprise, and one pays a price for doing it, whoever writes what he thinks is an adventurer and must take into account every possibility, like a prisoner planning a jailbreak.

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As for values, we live in a no-man's land. Neither the prewar values nor the contemporary Western values nor the contemporary Eastern values are applicable here. A liberal value system is fine, but the practice of it is a problem. The ideology of state socialism is on the decline, but the ideologies of democratic socialism or liberal democracy have not arrived yet. From the crow's nest the ship's boy does not cry, "Land ho!"

Even so, it is possible that interesting years are coming. If anything happens here, it will be because the Central Europeans do not acqui-

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esce, convinced that they are destined for something more. That they deserve better. The resurrection of human dignity here occasionally assumes dramatic proportions. Although democratic experiments have been short-lived and unsuccessful, they have not been wasted. Their energy, conserved, repressed, will break out in a later generation, with greater force.

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People in this region must make dangerous decisions even when they are not looking for trouble. A friend of mine once said, in response to a rebuke, that he was not hitting the wall with his head, the wall was hitting him. There are unintentional heroes. Who chooses to be a hero? Normal Western people don't get into such situations.

Many interesting, intense people from here have wandered all over the world, and many have stayed put. We live in the vicinity of Western Europe, in roughly the same cultural sphere, among the monuments of Europe's past. We are Europe in the past tense, the exotic next door.

Relativism is our peculiarity. We can look at a thing one way and then another. With both cynicism and pathos, a combination unfamiliar in the West.

A few of our visitors have said that during their stay they found something warm, as if remembered from a previous life.

There is a lot of conversation, if you like conversation. From this oral literature, never printed, never recorded, something has settled into our books.

We are at the geographical center of Europe. On a sixteenth-century Spanish map, Europe is a reclining lady; her head is the Iberian peninsula, and her navel is Buda. From Budapest one may look upon life no less effectively than from any other spot on earth.

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Here we are inbred. To our little world, its immediate family and its extended family, not only our relatives and friends belong, but our enemies as well. We have long known and kept an eye on each other. This intimacy is strange.

We have been pressed together into a small space; we are not empire-builders. From here we venture out into the larger world, then drift back, and cling together, nursing wounds of imagined offenses.

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We are not on the stage of world history; we do not brag about our power; people do not fear us. Our land is not as spacious, our spirit not as expansive as the Russians'; our mind understands the Western way of thinking better. We judge our circumstances, straitened by the East, from a point of view influenced by the West. Western ridicule counters Eastern inertia. Here one may learn how Eastern and Western mentalities contend—in our heads and in our beds.

Central European culture is both a half-breed and a cross-breed. It contains progress and fatalism. Premeditation and drunkenness. Time is not money here. We talk a lot, we sit at meetings. The trains run slower, the movies run slower.

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There are places we can go, people we can see, if we don't want to be alone. Sometimes there are violent, drunken brawls. An observer might think that such people are on bad terms, but no: they are merely getting things off their chests.

Our conversations branch like a luxuriantly leafy houseplant. Although our apartments are bugged, the talk flows in torrents. A new guest drops in, spends some time, and knows everybody—he knows even the people he does not know. There are moral judgments, cynical jokes. With such fairy tales we pass our history on to the younger generation. Paradoxes flower among the old pieces of furniture: threadbare, intricate, weatherbeaten relationships. □

TRANSLATED BY JAMES A. TUCKER

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Teresa Ghilarducci

UNIONS, PENSION FUNDS, AND THE ECONOMY

American unions have been generally more interested in pension benefits than pension funds. The employer-pension system originated in the late 1880s as a management device to ensure worker loyalty to the firm. Most pensions weren't portable (and still aren't); the threat of losing pensions added to the fear of losing one's job because of union activity. Today, however, unions negotiate strenuously for pensions. Not only do pensions supplement an inadequate Social Security system, they also give unions an advantage in organizing. Union workers have a service nonunion workers do not have—an agent who will negotiate for employer-based pensions. Privatized social insurance helps a union survive; what was once a management tool is now viewed as a hard-won union victory.

Pension plans also serve employer interests. Industry-wide pension plans (generally created by collective bargaining) stabilize the supply of workers in competitive industries (such as trucking, the needle trades, and construction). Not only does an industry-wide union contract help standardize costs and reduce competition between firms, but a pension plan, in particular, helps each industry and firm retain skilled workers—workers with employment-based pensions hesitate to leave their jobs.

Since the 1970s, the importance of employer pensions in providing income to the aged has paled beside the growing significance of pension funds in capital markets. Employer-sponsored pension plans provide less than 10 percent of retirement income, but pension plans provide over 50 percent of the new funds available in the stock and bond market. The fact that pension funds are a source of investment funds has benefited corporations. It also poses a challenge to the labor movement—most pension funds cover unionized workers.

Pensions and U.S. Corporations

Corporations have three sources of funds: banks, corporate profits, and the stock market. Obtaining investment capital from any of these sources has its drawbacks. Banks and corporations have adversarial relations—banks impose conditions and restrictions on corporate borrowers. Profits are a contested terrain where shareholder dividends and management salaries compete with investment projects for shares of corporate profits. Although the stock market has its disadvantages for management—it dilutes management's control over the firm—it is an attractive source of credit for corporations.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, funds available to firms in the stock market grew, in part, because the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) required pension funds to be advance-funded (funds must be set aside to pay for future pensions). ERISA also allows pension fund managers to move pension monies from stable, low yielding bonds to riskier and higher yielding stocks. The accompanying table shows one effect of this change. In 1950, pensions were primarily invested in corporate bonds and pension funds owned 13 percent of all outstanding corporate bonds. Over time, the percentage of corporate stock held by pension funds increased considerably,

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Corporate Ownership by Pension Funds: 1955–1983

YEAR	*Percent of Corporate Ownership Attributable to Pension funds* EQUITY	BONDS
1950	.9%	13%
1955	2%	24%
1970	7%	39%
1975	19%	42%
1984	23%	50%
1990	estimate 30%	49%

Source: Richard Ippolito, *Pensions, Economics, and Public Policy,* Dow Jones-Irwin, 1986, p. 124 Table 7–4

from less than 1 percent in 1950 to 23 percent in 1984. However, despite the liberalization in pension investment law, which encouraged funds to hold more stocks, the risk-adjusted rate of return on pension funds since 1969 underperformed the market. Bad management and the fact that pension funds hold a disproportionate amount of *Fortune* 500 stocks—these stocks yielded less return than average—explain why pension funds performed (relatively) poorly. But the *Fortune* 500 companies gained some advantage in this situation; pension funds were willing to buy their shares (issue credit) without the firms having to raise the dividend or market valuation of their companies' issues. Pension funds are the major stockholder and lender to corporate America. Pensions funds now equal 1.7 trillion dollars.

Corporations have gained handsomely from the financial side of the employer pension system. The beleaguered U.S. labor movement has also looked to its members' forced savings as a source of power.

Labor's Strategic Use of Pension Funds

So far, the labor movement's strategic use of pension funds has taken two promising, but necessarily limited, directions. The first is defensive: The labor movement uses pension fund clout to achieve its traditional goals of contract negotiation and organizing. The second is offensive: The labor movement redirects investment from speculative and anti-union activity to productive and union-affirming activity. A prime example of the defensive use of pension funds is a coordinated corporate campaign. Shareholder activism and other forms of exposure and embarrassment are the usual tactics of most corporate campaigns.

ACTWU's (Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union) JP Stevens campaign in the late 1970s combined union ownership of pension funds with a corporate campaign. After a protracted consumer boycott of JP Stevens products, in an effort to get a union election, the union uncovered the fact that JP Stevens shared a member of its board of directors with the Manufacturers Hanover Bank board. Manufacturers Hanover manages many union pension funds. These pension-owning unions threatened to boycott the bank's services if that shared director did not leave the bank board, or JP Stevens did not allow an election. A union election was held.

In 1986, ACTWU used pension clout to support a union election drive. It enlisted the help of a UAW (United Auto Workers) local in organizing the North Carolina firm of Reeves Brothers, Inc. ACTWU investigated the history and financial structure of Reeves and discovered that the Bell Helicopter Union Pension Fund owned 2 percent of its shares. The ACTWU organizer contacted the Texas UAW local that had a trustee on the Bell Helicopter Union Pension Fund. The trustee, writing as a union member and part owner of Reeves, sent a letter to every Reeves employee asking her or him to vote for ACTWU. Marc Stepp, a UAW vice president, also wrote to the employees, disputing the company's claims that auto manufacturers would drop their contracts if Reeves Brothers went union. This was a corporate campaign with a savvy twist—labor

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used its position as capital owner to challenge the claims of traditional capital owners.

Other popular defensive tactics are the clean fund strategy, or ethical investing, and shareholder activism. Several factors limit union success in using pension funds to influence corporate decisions. Initially campaigns may succeed because of the shock value of union involvement in financial matters. Much of unions' gains in corporate campaigns and boycotts may be due to the novelty of the tactic and corporations' lack of preparation for them. Second, shareholder activism works only if ownership does imply control, otherwise management can arrange differential voting rights and other protective strategies. Moreover, the Securities and Exchange Commission is considering corporate proposals to limit shareholders' rights to "be pests."

Labor's ability to control capital markets is restricted in three other respects: (1) the separation of corporate control from stock and bond ownership—especially in the case of subsidiaries and corporate parents; (2) portfolio information problems; and (3) the lack of union bargaining strength. For example, if a subsidiary of a conglomerate refuses to recognize a local of one union, what can that local do? Even if the local overcame the information problem and ascertained what pension funds actually owned shares, organizing a boycott would be difficult if the pension participants weren't unionized or if the union didn't have access to the investment manager (as is the case for over two-thirds of workers in collectively bargained pension plans). Unions need bargaining strength in order to negotiate representation on single-employer, non jointly trusteed pension investment boards. (Jointly trusteed pension funds are mainly in the building trades.) The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 prevents unions from having sole control over their workers' pension funds. If the control problem were solved, a boycott of the corporate parent's stocks and bonds would not necessarily affect a subsidiary's decisions.

National unions and federations are attempting to meet challenges both of control and information. The Service Employees International Union, the building trades, and the AFL-CIO, have been constructing data bases of union-controlled pension funds for the last eight years but the information-gathering problems are extensive. There are over ten thousand plans and the portfolio holdings of each fund can change daily. The Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO has recommended that unions negotiate positions on the pension investment board of their single-employer sponsored pension funds—the Eastern Airlines Machinists were able to negotiate such a position in the 1980s.

Although these defensive efforts are limited, they do aid unions in a traditional way. Pension fund strategies expose corporate dependency on labor's capital. This exposure makes management anxious, weakening its bargaining strength. In addition, revealing the link between workers and the nation's source of finance capital and credit strengthens workers' sense of their own economic importance; this further reduces management's relative bargaining power. Unions, by asserting the right to control pension funds, call on corporations to account for their use of pension funds. These challenges diminish the assumption of corporate legitimacy as well as financial institutions' imperial control over investment decisions. Moreover, these activities may stimulate legislative initiatives (say, under a Democratic administration) that would gradually disentangle pension fund control from the financial and corporate community.

The labor movement, especially the building trades, has made important strides in its offensive use of pension funds—efforts that try to correct for general bias in capital markets: bias against small business, community development, and long-term stability versus short-term profits. There are gaps in capital markets; some types of profitable concerns are often bypassed by financiers. In 1979, the UAW achieved a historic agreement with the Chrysler Corporation. Although Chrysler workers took a pay cut and were severed from the GM and Ford agreements, Chrysler agreed that 10 percent of all new pension contributions would be invested in health maintenance organiza-

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tions, worker housing, retiree centers, and other socially desirable projects, as long as a "reasonable" rate of return (measured only in terms of monetary rates of return) was earned. A similar agreement followed at GM in 1984. But, in exchange, GM was allowed to move more pension assets under its control.

In the same family of efforts to correct failure in capital markets, unions in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona are establishing banks with union pension funds as initial deposits (similar to the labor banks of the 1920s) that are dedicated to serving the banking needs of low- and middle-income workers. And, in 1983, in Weirton, West Virginia, the non-AFL-CIO affiliated union at the National Steel Company, Weirton Steel Works, used the company's pension liabilities as bargaining leverage to negotiate an employee buyout of the firm in order to prevent its closure. Today, that steel mill is completely worker owned and is one of the most profitable in the industry.

The building trades, in an effort to overcome waning ability to obtain contracts and conduct strikes, have increased the supply of mortgages and real estate development funds for union-only construction. A side effect—not the unions' major motivation—is that this diversion helps fill a capital gap for housing. Over eleven projects across the country with varying arrangements and goals have pooled money from regional pension funds. One recent example is the Bricklayers' and Laborers' Non-Profit Housing Co. Inc., composed of Bricklayer Union and Laborers' Union pension fund investment, which buys federally insured certificates of deposit (CDs) with small subsidies from participating unions from the US Trust Bank in Boston. These CDs finance construction loans for union-built, low-price housing for South Boston residents. There are other building trade investment projects, such as the Union Labor Life Insurance Company (ULLICO) "J for Jobs" project, which invests union pension funds in an open-ended trust that invests in union-built construction (ULLICO is a life insurance company founded by the AFL in 1920). An estimated $230 to $500 million has been directed into real estate projects by building trades investment financing foundations since the late 1970s.

The building trades have come closest to challenging the appropriateness of using market rates of return in assessing the quality of an investment; they argue that pension funds can be used to meet the employment needs of pension participants—with one important stipulation. Investments in union-only built construction, or in other ventures beneficial to members, can be made only if the funds do not sacrifice a risk-adjusted monetary rate of return. Unions generally have not challenged the limitations of this narrow focus. If a certain investment guaranteed participants jobs but earned less than the market rate of return it would not be legal. Calculating a genuine rate of return, one that would take into account job security and monetary rates of return, is a task yet to be undertaken.

Limitations of Property Rights

Beyond these important, but limited, defensive and offensive tactics there is a need for long-run, systemic changes in the way labor's capital is invested. Unions have argued that because they own the funds they should have control over the investments. This short-term strategy and argument can be compelling. Rights-based claims are the currency of American political action, but such a focus may obscure long-term goals to channel investment funds into projects that will provide well-paying and secure jobs.

There are a number of problems with the focus on ownership rights. First, labor has lost most legal battles over ownership "rights." Corporations have almost always won the right to terminate plans and revert "excess" assets for their own use. In cases where union contracts do not disallow it, corporations can use their employees' pension trusts to fend off takeovers, to court "white knights," to buy the company's stock, and to terminate plans (which had more assets than legal liabilities) in order to use the extra cash. Since May 31, 1980, over 13 billion dollars (almost 10 percent of all private funds) has been captured by corporations in pension plan terminations. (The Pension Protection Act of 1987 limited some of these practices and, in turn, the rate of growth of defined-benefit pension plans is falling.)

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The second problem with basing control arguments on ownership rights is ideological. In using the ownership and control argument, labor becomes a defender of property rights. Identifying the owners of pension funds is not equivalent to identifying the source of funds. All property is created socially, while owners are created legally. Pensions are one type of property, evolving from American industrial relations and the specific policies of the state concerning the Social Security program and the appropriate mechanisms for capital accumulation. Worker's forced savings are a social creation and, therefore, should be controlled by society—made up mostly of workers. The source of the funds can be traced to workers, but fighting over ownership rights avoids the real contest over just how pension funds should be used.

Policy Directions

The use of pension funds, not necessarily their ownership, is the key issue in pension fund reform. Increasing global competition, changes in the U.S. industrial mix, and growing inequalities of income and wealth require economic planning and control over global speculation and capital mobility. Moreover, the baby boom generation will swell the retirement ranks in the coming decades and, subsequently, will create pressure for an efficient and fair way to distribute pension benefits.

The AFL-CIO, in 1980, urged its affiliates to bargain for a small percentage of their pension funds to be invested in the aforementioned ULLICO. Perhaps the labor movement can extend that idea. But, instead of bargaining for clauses that require fund managers to reallocate pension fund monies to ULLICO, the labor movement can support legislation that would require that pension monies be redirected into a particular fund dedicated to create employment and stabilize communities. Union-sponsored legislation could require that a small percentage of each tax-exempt pension fund be pooled in a fund that is administered by a public board. Labor would gain influence in directing investment through its representatives on the board.

The pension fund management industry—banks, insurance companies, and money managers—would be an important constituency to reckon with and could be given a role in managing these funds. In Finland, the private capital industry is a key component of Finland's management of its "social capital fund."

The labor movement might consider a long-term strategy that integrates Social Security with employment-based, or occupation-based plans, such as the university professors' TIAA-CREF, or the building trades pension funds. In 1981, the President's Commission on Pension Policy (under President Jimmy Carter) recommended a mandatory pension system. All employers would be required to have a pension fund and contributions would be a minimum of 3 percent of salaries. Labor could add a new twist to this mandatory pension scheme by proposing that these mandatory pension funds be invested in a social capital fund. Under such a mandatory system, unions would lose their advantages derived from privatized, and voluntary, social insurance; they would also lose the advantages pension strategies yielded (for instance, in corporate campaigns and construction financing). But labor must weigh these disadvantages against the benefits of a universal retirement income security program and the creation of a social capital fund. The relationship between employer pensions and union bargaining strength has irrefragably changed. What was once a mid-century advantage for unions is now, at the end of the century, a disadvantage. It doesn't have to remain one. □

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Harvey Wheeler

WHERE WALL AND PENNSYLVANIA INTERSECT

Economics in the Information Age

Tourist guidebooks say that Wall Street starts at Broadway and ends at the East River. Political analysts know better: at the end Wall Street changes into Pennsylvania Avenue. Economics alone can no longer explain the ups and downs of the stock market. The recent Wall Street crash was more accurately telegraphed by political than by economic indicators.

During the past six years the objective economic situation has steadily worsened. Our technological leadership in the world declined steadily and so did our standard of living. If at any time a Wall Street crash had occurred it would have been easy to show it was warranted on economic grounds. The fact that no recession occurred left economists perplexed, constantly revising their forecasts and furiously seeking magical new market indicators. Purely economic indicators no longer "predicted" the future state of the economy. The market no longer fluctuated in classical accord with underlying economic conditions but rose steadily like Bel Air real estate.

If our economy has been crash-prone for so many years, why didn't one occur? And when it happened, why did it come just at that time? Some kind of preventive equilibration was operating but it was not the result of self-adjusting market forces. It came primarily from the interaction of two factors: Warware Keynesianism and Reagan's professional mastery of TV politics—deficit and opinion management. Both have been much discussed but the latter requires special attention.

It has always been acknowledged that "confidence" has a great deal to do with the decisions of investors and hence with the behavior of the stock market. People who lose confidence in a bank can destroy it even though it may be technically solvent. Something similar holds on Wall Street. In former times confidence in the economy was what mattered. Today the economic factor has been supplemented by a political factor. An economy may be technically insolvent but kept going politically by ever larger deficits. Then, however, the confidence factor shifts from people's attitudes about the economy to their attitudes about the administration. If people continue to have confidence in the administration, Wall Street may reflect that political euphoria rather than assessments of securities markets on economic terms. As a practical matter, this means that Wall Street is heavily dependent upon the confidence people bestow upon the president; on a political confidence index. That, in turn, depends upon the opinion-management skills of the White House. The Executive Office of the President is primarily a public relations firm.

There is a large industry devoted to communications and a sizable segment of it engages in public opinion measurement. Most polling is associated with commercial advertising. However, much of its work is devoted to measuring political attitudes. Every major candidate has a court pollster. The White House is constantly taking the public pulse. One upshot of this is the "spin control" specialists; those communi-

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cations alchemists who specialize in turning gaffes into gold. But polling is a flawed science. Informal biases distort the results, especially when asking about the President of the United States. A subconscious reservoir of patriotic pride inhibits expression of negative impressions. When people talk to a pollster, an inner censor intervenes and masks their inner feelings and hunches. Polls are static cross sections that transform a momentary reading into a specious stability, failing to record the volatility of day-to-day reactions. Polls are not interactive. They are dumb to the cross-stimulations that trigger the kind of mob psychology that leads to a run on a bank. When people address their pocketbooks they are not nearly as inhibited as they are in addressing pollsters. Uninhibited evaluations are precisely what a stock market captures, and then magnifies. As Keynes pointed out, market trading is not only about money trends, it is about people's opinions of money trends. And it is also about people's opinions about people's opinions about money trends. Markets are notoriously mob-engendering institutions. Their regulatory devices are designed to curb some mob behavior; not all of it because that is what market insiders feast upon.

The market is an interactive opinion polling mechanism whose instantaneous transaction readouts stimulate people on three levels. Last October computer-driven trading programs provided an additional multiplier effect. Today its polling is highly sensitive to people's opinions about the president's continued ability to use the media to dominate Congress and maintain deficit support.

President Reagan is the acknowledged master of video rhetoric. Reagan's "rhetoric" is to be understood in the technical sense of Cicero's art of rhetoric, not as a synonym for verbiage. Reagan, the video professional, reinvented for television a structure of persuasion that the ancient rhetors had first invented for assemblies. Marshall McLuhan taught us that the form of rhetoric is determined by both the audience and the means of communicating with it.

Dialogical persuasion, in a court or council, has always carried high prestige. When the art of rhetorical persuasion is addressed unilaterally at the masses it is called demagoguery. Hitler, Churchill, and FDR were master demagogues. Our constitution contains several safeguards against demagoguery. Demagogues were threats to party politics and bossism. The parties responded by developing buffers against demagogues. Today, constitutional safeguards and party buffers are no longer effective against the master rhetors of television.

By the middle of his film and tv career Ronald Reagan had developed a low key pseudo-dialogical rhetoric of commonsense individualism. To video watchers, atomized in their homes, his plain-spoke reasoning carried calm, head-nodding persuasion. This well-crafted political software became the essential complement to deficit-financed Warware Keynesianism. These two politico-economic features working in tandem constitute the true "Reaganomics," not supply-side theory.

This reciprocating engine worked well during the first term. The rhetoric worked because of the public euphoria purchased with the warware; the warware bills were passed because of the high rhetorical art of the video professional. Their mutual reinforcement forestalled both political and economic crises. If either misfired the entire engine would fail. Both faltered as the second term opened.

Our underlying economic deterioration is well known: rising deficits; increasing poverty; adverse trade; decline in health; failure in education; slippage in science; welfare in default; technology in arrears; the environment degraded. However, this secular crisis was reflected in few of the financial indicators. There was little objective change in the economy just prior to the crash. In fact, *Business Week* could still, after the crash subsided (November 30, 1987) prove to its own satisfaction that if the Fed hadn't raised interest rates in the early eighties everything would still be just fine.

Perhaps—except for the underlying political deterioration. In 1987, for the first time, Reagan's political reverses began to have a cumulative effect. By October his invincibility was in doubt. The main events are well known: election defeats; Reykjavik failure; Iran/*contra;* multiple scandals; Persian Gulf recklessness;

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peace in Nicaragua; and the trigger: the Bork/Ginsburg rejections.

As the political environment became increasingly hostile, Reagan's rhetoric turned petulant and he retreated behind a bunker psychology. His style changed from suave persuasion to plaintive self-vindication. The rhetorical arts that previously produced equilibration instead produced a "catastrophe cusp." This is the dread condition known to sailors when the normal controls of a boat produce reverse conditions and lead to a capsize. Reagan's rhetoric now functioned in a reversing environment that converted each evasive tactic into a self-accelerating defeat.

In early October a crisis of confidence began to develop—not in Wall Street but in the Reagan mystique. Iran/*contra* got to him. His tardy and faltering rhetorical efforts were ineffective. His attempt to translate the secret presidential war into homespun warware individualism came across as patent chicanery.

The Bork defeat was the crippling blow. The hearings showed concretely, case by case, that Reagan's brand of individualism was anti-humanitarian. His defenses of Bork turned perversely against himself. Reagan's own rhetoric weakened Reaganism and elicited the outbreak of a new humanitarian consciousness in both Congress and the nation.

The economic indicators failed to predict the market collapse but the political indicators had all been negative for more than a month. The Reagan video software, instead of complementing the warware, now undermined it and produced political, not economic crisis.

This situation was exacerbated by a constitutional problem. We have no between-elections way to resolve a political crisis. Britain, for example, would have had cabinet shakeups, or even falls, over such as Iran/*contra*, the Meese scandals, the Bork/Ginsburg defeats, and the Persian Gulf adventures. While waiting for our quadrennial elections we, however, must make do with demonstrations, riots and congressional defiance. Such crude crisis-resolving devices have led to a series of failed presidencies. On October 19 the crisis that had been building to a head on Pennsylvania Avenue found issue on Wall Street. This is shown by a study of two influential economics journals: the *Economist* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

In the period preceding the crash the *Economist* was preoccupied with the American crisis but focused on spiritual and political malaise rather than the economy. Four of the five issues preceding the crash had cover stories about America's decline. One shows a puzzled Statue of Liberty. The caption is: "Whatever Happened to America's Smile?" The story documents the decline in American power and wealth as contributing to her spiritual depression: "the new mood owes much to a new, and more sombre, assessment of the Reagan presidency. . . ." The cover story the week before the crash shows Mt. Rushmore's four sculpted presidents, but nobody (that is, not Reagan) to join them as number five. The caption is "The Perfect President." The cover story is an oblique but pointed discussion of Reagan as a failed president.

The *Wall Street Journal* has a famous twin-columned box entitled "What's News." It runs down the center of the front page. The October 19 Wall Street quake can be traced in the seismic foreshakes recorded daily in that box. But *not* in "Business at a Glance," the economics column. Only in "World Wide," the political affairs column. A day-to-day survey of these staccato items indexes Reagan-reversing events on a broad front.

October begins with Bork losing ground steadily. The preliminary draft of the Senate Iran/*contra* report is strongly critical of Reagan and his chief aides. Republican Senator Arlen Spector, a brilliant interrogator, announced against Bork.

Nothing is going well for Reagan. Salvador begins cease-fire talks with the rebels. The General Accounting Office says the administration financing of pro-*contra* propaganda violated congressional restrictions. A new coup attempt forces Aquino to close three radio stations. The U.S. sinks three Iranian patrol boats. Iran follows with missile strike against a US-owned tanker. Ortega's UN speech is well received. Arias gets the Nobel Peace Prize.

Daily press talleys show Bork sinking fast. Republicans urge his withdrawal. Reagan signals, "keep going"; he will fight on to the end. Now it is just Bork, Reagan and the far right.

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Reagan pleads doggedly on TV for Bork but the networks ignore him. The magic of the great video rhetor is gone.

The last week before the crash was ominous. There had been no press conference for months. At an innocuous Rose Garden photo opportunity ceremony Sam Donaldson sprang out of the bushes in a surprise attack. The "daily diary of the American dream" reports that world financial markets, like unruly colonials, are growing "tempestuous."

By Thursday the market had fallen on a broad front, down 235.48 points. On Friday Washington leaks said Reagan was being urged to bomb Iran. The *New York Times* published a front page picture spread of finance authorities with reassuring quotes. On Saturday Nancy had breast cancer tests.

On Sunday, October 18, several things come to a head. Nuclear tests were scheduled despite the summit. Reagan revealed he had decided on his response to Iran but wouldn't say what it was.

But the main event occurred on the weekend TV. Correspondents reported in from every sector of the Bork war. It was a complete rout. The president's once fearsome political clout had vanished.

Nancy had surgery. The week that began on October 12 was arguably the most devastating of Ronald Reagan's entire career. It was followed by the most devastating Wall Street crash since 1929.

On Monday the crash trajectory began early. It picked up momentum after 2 pm EDT when Iran's offshore platforms were bombed.

At this writing, some eight months after the big crash, two minor tremors have occurred. Each followed further blows to the Reagan mystique. Just prior to the most recent tumble in May, four embarrassments peaked, leaving Reagan looking indecisive, inept and foolish. The Meese charades, replayed again and again, made a personal attachment into a national scandal. Noriega's defiance, reminiscent in small of the Iran/*contra* debacle, made the Reagan administration appear congenitally incompetent. Larry Speakes disclosed a dotty stooge. Donald Regan revealed a henpecked dupe. The nation's fallen confidence index was transmitted immediately to Wall Street.

No economic indicators predicted any of the three Wall Street crises. Only the political indicators of the president's communications

Reagan and the Cities

While total federal spending under the Reagan administration has increased 100 percent, assistance to cities and towns has been cut by 72 percent. The administration in fact has requested more for foreign aid than it has requested for aid to U.S. cities. The Republicans killed the Urban Development Action Grant program created in 1977 for inner-city economic development and revitalization. UDAG will not receive any new funding in 1989. Reagan also eliminated General Revenue Sharing—a program set up by Richard Nixon to make sure every city had a minimum revenue base to meet public needs.

In 1979 federal funds for 255,000 new housing units were appropriated; in 1988 the appropriation was for 18,000; for 1989 it is 13,600. To make matters worse, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 slashed the amount of interest investors can deduct. Right now there is no incentive to build, own or operate low-income housing. Says Frank Shafroth, director of federal relations for the National League of Cities, "The housing crisis now pales compared to what's coming. . . . We are sitting on a time bomb."

Homelessness increased 25 percent in 1987, and just about that much in 1986. It has been rising steadily since Reagan took office, as the cumulative effects of the housing cutbacks kick in.

This is the Reagan legacy to the cities.

—Thomas Plate
Newsday, 8/17/88 □

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effectiveness correlate with market behavior, and they do so with stunning accuracy. This does not prove that the same rhetoric factors will influence market fluctuations under future presidents. However, we are in the Information Era. Information substitutes for capital even in conventional economic analysis. In retrospect we can assess the Carter administration as adequate in nearly every department but rhetoric.

Six propositions: (1) In today's "post-ideology" politics the old left/right, liberal/conservative divisions have given way to a new individualist/humanitarian polarization. This shift began under Carter but was consolidated under Reagan. That is the true "Reagan Revolution." It was accompanied by a shift from party bossism to video vote leveraging.

(2) The individualist/humanitarian reorientation has made factional shifts between congressional blocs more volatile, more sensitive to public opinion, and therefore more responsive to a president's video rhetoric.

(3) Success at video rhetoric can work wonders in Congress; failure can produce crises, including a Wall Street crash.

(4) In our new "information age," the measure of a president's rhetorical effectiveness has become one of the most important economic indicators. This was negatively apparent under Carter. The first Reagan administration provides positive, and the second negative, confirmations of the primacy of video rhetoric.

(5) Our society's politics and its economics have both become functionally dependent upon the sustained effectiveness of presidential demagoguery.

(6) This two-hundreth anniversary of the writing of the constitution is a particularly good time to study the rhetorical aspects of the Wall Street crash. We are a crisis-prone nation with no constitutional mode of crisis resolution. Both Pennsylvania Avenue and Wall Street are hostages to a constitutional lacuna. □

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Irving Howe

WHAT SHOULD WE BE TEACHING?

Something important is happening in American universities, in the humanities especially; and serious people ought to be paying attention. The two comments that follow merely glance at a problem to which we shall return.—EDS.

A debate is now going forward—sometimes raging, sometimes smoldering—over the kind of curriculum that should be offered to college students in literature and the humanities generally. For example, core humanities classes are sometimes offered to freshmen and sophomores as a survey of great texts, intended to made up for the deficiencies of our high schools, and indeed, of our culture. The current debate goes under the portentous name of "canon formation"—which in plain English means, how is the body of great works established? who decides? and in what ways can or should decisions be changed? Do traditional judgments about the classics still need to be respected? Should we train students to read a novel by Jane Austen or Dickens, or is it better to be "relevant" and offer, say, the fiction of Alice Walker or, as occurs in a major university, a course in "the texts of MTV"? At its deepest levels, this debate touches on fundamental issues of culture and society—as was dimly recognized in a *New York Times Magazine* article (June 5, 1988) by James Atlas entitled "The Battle of the Books." With evident approbation Atlas focused on those professors, notably at Duke University, who are leading the charge against a traditional canon in teaching the humanities. Atlas's trendy piece is dealt with below by David Bromwich, and I will simply use it to cite a few professors whom Atlas quotes.

The most dramatic recent debate occurred earlier this year at Stanford University. Some students, led on one occasion by Jesse Jackson, picketed with the chant, "Hey hey, ho ho, Western culture's got to go." Anyone acquainted with our universities might conclude that a good part of it has already gone, but let that be. The students complained that a required introductory course in the humanities did not include non-European and black authors and thereby revealed racist bias. Finally the university yielded in part, retaining in the course books from the Bible, as well as selections from Plato, Augustine, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and Marx. Eliminated, as I recall, were Hume, Locke and Mill. A non-European text would be added, with "substantial attention to issues of race, gender and class."*

What can one reasonably conclude from the Stanford imbroglio? In a course on the classics, a distinct good may be served by teaching a non-Western text, when it is a great work like, say, *The Tale of the Genji*. Yet there was something wrong about the way the Stanford decision was made, as a response to political pressures. This means that the basic humanities curriculum becomes subject to bargaining by "constituencies," rather than determined by that community of learning which a faculty ought to be. If, tomorrow, Hispanic, Jewish and Asian groups were to demand "representation" in the humanities curriculum, would Stanford also yield to them?

Nor is there any strong reason for giving "substantial attention to issues of race, gender and class" in such courses. The Bible, Homer, Plato, Sophocles, Shakespeare are central to our culture; some knowledge of these or closely similar texts is part of any higher education worthy of the name, regardless of whether they provide "substantial"

* Ex-Secretary of Education William Bennett chose this moment to attack Stanford for surrendering to "ignorance, irrationality, and intimidation." Bennett's devotion to the classics has its comic side; he might well turn his passion for the great books to the Reagan cabinet members, and the president he reveres, before lecturing the Stanford faculty. (The president, that is, who so admires the writings of Louis L'Amour.) One suspects that for people like Bennett, the great books are mainly seen as a barrier through which liberal and radical ideas cannot penetrate. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that there are also serious conservatives engaged with this issue, and that they sometimes say things with which we can agree.

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materials on "race, gender and class." (These latter are better dealt with in courses in history and sociology.) And it ought to be part of any serious university education that students be encouraged to get past the provincialism of the contemporary. They go to college in order to learn something they cannot learn in the streets, on TV, or even at a political rally.

Some of the most urgent criticisms of the humanist canon come from feminist scholars, and these should be considered sympathetically. Still, there is a difference between the general sociopolitical critique offered by feminism, essentially valid, and its particular applications to teaching and writing, which need to be considered case by case.

One common criticism is that women writers are underrepresented in literature courses. It all depends. I don't suppose there can be many courses in the nineteenth-century English novel that fail to include such great writers as Jane Austen, Emily Bronte and George Eliot, and sometimes such important writers as Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell. A course in the Age of Shakespeare cannot, however, offer many women writers: that is a reality of history. Nor can I conceive a course in American literature that failed to include such writers as Emily Dickinson, Edith Wharton, and Flannery O'Connor, to mention only a few of our distinguished women writers. But when Professor Marjorie Garber of Harvard tells us that the eighteenth-century English writer Aphra Behn is "a major figure" or when attempts are made to blow up the reputations of decidedly minor nineteenth-century American women writers, then qualified literary people have grounds for skepticism.

Still, it seems entirely plausible that, because of sexual bias, there have been women writers of the past who have been unduly neglected. Professor Jane Tompkins of Duke is quoted by Atlas as saying that a nineteenth-century novel by Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World,* reissued last year by the Feminist Press, is a neglected valuable work. We should accept her suggestion to read this book and see if we agree.

Far more troubling is the canon bashing which proceeds out of a complicated mixture of motives. Some is a hangover from the counterculture of the sixties. Some is old-style American populism dressed up in new-style literary theory: a distaste for highbrow European authors picked up from imports of European criticism. Some may occasionally result from a feeling of young instructors that they are not well qualified to teach the great texts and would be better occupied with their own specialties. Some is certainly due to recent critical approaches which induce skepticism, even a sort of routine nihilism, regarding distinctions of value in the reading of literature.

Professor Tompkins explains that the interest in "canon formation" arises as a series of questions: how did the classics ever become classics? have there been ideological biases at work? have elite professorial and literary hierarchies handed down self-protective standards and preferences that choke off fresh or dissident views?

Now these are hardly new questions, and there is a scholarly literature on such topics. Ideological and class biases have of course influenced the making of cultural traditions, as they have entered every other department of human experience. (Such questions may well be considered in introductory classics courses—though not, one hopes, to disparage the classics.) It is equally true that literary and academic communities exhibit a tendency to self-protective behavior (which doesn't distinguish them from other communities). Yet the reality of American academic and literary life these past several decades has, if anything, been *very* different: English departments have rushed, sometimes fecklessly, to embrace the new and the sensational. (Remember how widespread was the use in our universities of Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* until it turned out that the book was not exactly written by Cleaver and that the road from Black Panther rhetoric to big business conservatism was, for Cleaver, shorter than supposed.) What has dominated the teaching of literature has been not a rigid old-fogeyism but a cheerful pluralism bordering on incoherence.

Canon bashers argue from two opposite premises:

(1) The canon, as Atlas puts it, has been "for the most part . . . closed." David Bromwich shows how ill-informed, to put it mildly, Atlas is; and one could as easily show, for instance, how the reputations of major writers like George Eliot and Thomas Hardy have undergone radical shifts. The literary "tradition" has actually been a complex of competing traditions that represent sharply opposed intellectual outlooks. Think only of the Milton controversy in recent decades as reflected in the criticism of Eliot, Leavis, Empson and many others.

(2) The contrary argument is advanced by Gerald Graff of Northwestern who is quoted by Atlas as saying there has never been a consensus as to what the great books are. "Canon-busting is nothing new," Graff is quoted as saying. "There has always been politics. Teaching Shakespeare instead of the classics was a radical innovation."

Not a happy example, I'm afraid. Teaching

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Shakespeare instead of, say, Sophocles may have been unavoidable in the age of mass education, and there were probably some cultural losses involved. But it meant replacing one great writer by another, while today the problem in the universities is something very different: an effort to disintegrate or at least damage the very idea of a classic and to replace it with a hodge-podge of currently fashionable items. Alice Walker is not an adequate substitute for George Eliot, and where it is pretended otherwise, students are being shortchanged. At Duke, according to Atlas, the English department now offers courses in "the Western" which includes the work of that great writer Louis L'Amour. (Perhaps after his retirement President Reagan will sit in.) Students taking such a course, very likely with meager cultural backgrounds, will not end with much more than a new meagerness.

Nor is it true, as Graff is reported to have said, that there "has never been any consensus about the best that had been thought and said and done." There have been sharp disagreements regarding relative merits and stresses; but, with valuable internal shifts, the canon has persisted because, as Frank Kermode writes, "history is, under all the appearances of change, a unity; the modern is not absolutely new, but a renovation of a classic which the action of time has obscured. . . ." Traditions change, but with a continuity of value, judgment, sensibility. There is a substance that prevails, some deep persistence of response—otherwise, we would be living in the sheerest chaos, and not only would it not matter what was taught, Shakespeare or Louis L'Amour, there wouldn't even be any reason for hard-strapped parents to send their children to universities, since the paperback displays in drugstores would do as well.

Which brings us to "relevance," a throwback to the worst of the counterculture. Professor Tompkins is quoted by Atlas as saying the classics "didn't address her own experience." Why should they? And more to the point, can her experience address the classics? One (not the only) reason for reading the classics is that they widen and deepen our experience, pulling us out of the all-too-visible limits that any single self is likely to have. Precisely the "irrelevance" of the classics is what makes them relevant.

How shall a generation know its story
If it will know no other? . . .

Edgar Bowers

In the America of today, with its avoidance of the historical sense and its fixation on the contemporary, there is an especially good reason for focusing (it needn't of course be exclusively so) on great works of the past. When I began teaching at Brandeis in the 1950s, you could at least expect entering students to have read a play by Shakespeare and a novel by Dickens. Today that is often no longer the case. To guide students to works written as far back as somewhat before their date of birth, means to open them—you try, you hope, you don't always succeed—to *the other*, to an experience, an outlook different from their own.

One curious aspect of canon bashing is the notion some of its adherents have that they are up to something "radical." They are wrong. Populist maybe; radical no. The central tradition of socialism, which includes Marxism in its more humane versions, has always declared that the culture of the past (which one experiences as the culture of the present) ought to form a common human heritage and that a deeply objectionable aspect of class societies is that they deprive large segments of the population of proper access to that culture. Democratic theories of education have stressed diffusion, not dilution. That this creates grave and even intractable problems in teaching, we all know. But good teachers, including those who hold to the outlook of democratic socialism, ought to be dedicated to this concept of education.

There's a story I like, and you will immediately see its pertinence. The old IWW leader Bill Haywood was once, in the early 1920s, seen smoking 25¢ cigars. When reporters teased him about this indulgence, Bill replied: "Boys, nothing's too good for the proletariat." □

David Bromwich

Canon Bashing

This academic year, the *New York Times Magazine* observed the end of spring term with an article ("The Battle of the Books," June 5) on the current anticanonical fashion in teaching literature. The *Magazine* has taken a noticeable interest in culture, lately: an article earlier in the year on trends in academic feminism; and another, just two weeks before this one, on the fate of the humanities at Columbia University. But the story in question, mostly about some professors at Duke, was thrown together and written up in the usual way by James Atlas—*Times* correspondent on the Intellectual Beat, and author of a novel, *The Great Pretender*. Last summer, in the same kind of article for the same

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journal, he had addressed with equal relish a somewhat different subject: the life, relations, and picturesque anecdotes of Professor Allan Bloom. Not two years before, it was the neoconservative intellectuals and their undisputed ascendancy in the culture of 1985; Duke University, in that year, not having yet made its appearance on any of the relevant maps. The hype in these pieces is always the same—cheap reverence, and a pandering servility. But our concern here is not with Atlas, whom we leave to his projects, but rather some of his new informants, and the things they want us to believe.

When a new fashion really hits, academics look as bad as everyone else. In all the fever of public self-absorption, they lose their grip even on facts that were once thought common knowledge. This is a rich subject. But, for now, here is a "fact-check" on two statements that were meant to go down routinely.

• *Specimen One.* The following assertion covers, apparently, the last two to four centuries (in contrast with the last five to ten years). "Occasional disputes broke out, reputations flourished and declined. T.S. Eliot smuggled in the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets, Malcolm Cowley promoted Faulkner, there was a Henry James revival. For the most part, though, the canon was closed. You were either on the syllabus or off the syllabus."

It is noteworthy that "the syllabus" alone is taken to decide membership in a canon. But that is a small confusion, or anachronism. Pass over it and you come to a pretty steady assumption. History can be divided into two parts: first, the way they used to do things (you know, *them:* Pope, Emerson, the Bronte sisters, people like that); and second, the way we do things now, in the classrooms and color supplements. The caption here ought to read: *We're so smart today because they were so dumb yesterday.* But how far is this claim borne out by the cases mentioned above?

Start with those "seventeenth-century metaphysical poets" Eliot is supposed to have "smuggled in" to the canon. Donne was the most controversial of them; and it is easy to learn something about him. You can find a sentence of qualified praise for his originality in Samuel Johnson's *Life of Cowley.* Coleridge admired his poems, spoke of them warmly and often, and wrote an imitation of them. Yeats knew a good deal about Donne without any help from Eliot. So it begins to look as if this were not quite a matter of smuggling, after all. What Eliot actually did was to convince a lot of readers that Donne ought to be valued in the special way of a poet who still matters to living poets. Eliot gave reasons, and wrote poems of his own, and he changed people's minds: in this, he did what persuasive readers have often done, throughout the history of literature and criticism. Indeed, so far was the canon from being "for the most part . . . closed" that it takes an act of recovery to see how the great reputations came to be what they are today.

Consider the fortunes of Wordsworth. For the first two decades of his career, he was appreciated by a small circle and heartily despised by the established reviewers. He climbed, slowly, to a safe esteem, and clinched his public respectability by accepting the poet laureateship a few years before his death. By then, however, he had lost the respect of his poetic successors—one of whom buried him five years before his death, in a poem called "The Lost Leader." His work stayed alive partly because a good anthologist, Palgrave, and critics like Arnold and Bradley, wanted to hold on to certain poems and passages. Their kind of approval seems to have lasted well into this century, in the textbooks at least; meanwhile, it was already under siege in the antiromantic manifestos of Pound, Eliot, and their modernist school; so that, for the New Critics, the rare defense of a poem by Wordsworth could seem a test of mastery on a par with the more intricate moves in chess. The large-scale revival of Wordsworth, which the current anticanonical wisdom accepts as a thing of timeless provenance, was (it is no exaggeration to say) the effect of advocacy by readers, critics, and scholars, working separately or in concert over the last thirty years. At present, the severer sort of academic republicans have come to dislike his paternalism again, and are therefore about to supplant him with the always popular, continental and ingratiating Byron.

In short, the latest academic consensus, in 1988, approaches a point the argument had reached around 1818, which did not prove to be the end of anything. Here Wordsworth is a representative and not an exceptional case.

• *Specimen Two.* We spare the reader some extensive descriptions of clothes and furniture. "One afternoon," continues Atlas, "I talk with Stanley Fish, the chairman of Duke's English department, in his newly renovated office. . . . He's never been comfortable with the T.S. Eliot tradition, he says, though he's one of the leading Milton scholars in America."

The last sentence is exactly as cogent as "He's never been comfortable with the Jeremiah tradition, though he's one of the leading scholars of the gospel of John." Milton, that is to say, was simply not part of the T.S. Eliot tradition. He was at the center of a protestant tradition Eliot wanted to displace; and Eliot attacked it (and Milton above all) with scorn,

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snobbery, and a fine selective connoisseurship; but anyway he did his work consistently. The truth is that Eliot and Milton have almost nothing in common—apart from the fact that they were white males. If that is enough to constitute them as a tradition, and even the sole "great" tradition (to be reviled the more fiercely on that account), then all of us are in trouble—the people who believe the story, as much as those who, knowing better, would rather say nothing and have an office that they can live in comfortably.

Morals, said William Carlos Williams, are the memory of success that no longer succeeds. Academic swingers say that great work in the arts, too, is a matter only of provisional success, and they want to see it become a distant memory. With journalism ready to flatter this claim, they are in a position to evangelize more thoroughly than ever before. But they argue better than they read, and their arguments all have the same first step: a confusion of mass culture with democracy. In the coming years, these will be some of the people worth fighting against. □

W.E. Scheuerman

THE NEW STUDENT RADICALS

Students remain active in a variety of left-liberal causes. Students have marched with unionists at Yale and Harvard, staged anti-*contra* sit-ins in congressional offices in upstate New York, registered voters in Kentucky, protested campus racism in Michigan and Massachusetts, and staffed the Simon and Jackson campaigns across the country. It may be premature to talk about a "student movement," but it is myopic to see today's students as apolitical and inactive.

Many commentators have described us as a pragmatic, even cautious generation. As long as one doesn't equate pragmatism with a lack of principles or militancy, this is probably correct. The anti-apartheid movement showed that "pragmatic" political demands can generate a combative movement. It's just that we have a difficult time believing in the broad emancipatory projects of our predecessors. How could it be otherwise? Our clearest political memories are of Jimmy Carter, periodic economic recessions, hostages in Iran, Jerry Falwell, military adventurism in Grenada, and the drivel of Ronald Reagan. It's hard to believe in "the revolution" when you're growing up in a country ruled by a man who believes in astrology. For many of us, the belief in the possibility of *any* progressive political change, let alone radical change, has often seemed like an act of faith. Indeed, in a world in which the democratic left, even in its social democratic West European variant, seems incapable of showing us a way out of the impasse of late capitalism, it's obviously difficult to accept the possibility of a humane postcapitalist order, especially when one hasn't experienced a time when people thought otherwise.

Predictably, those of us who are socialists strike our peers as something odd, even benignly anachronistic. Our "socialism" appears as a strange but harmless illness we've probably contracted from our parents. Admittedly, this has probably always been true of modern American politics. Yet this seems more true today than ever before. As many have noted, American liberalism and socialism have always had a symbiotic relationship. For better or worse, we need each other. Consequently, the precipitous decline of reform-minded liberalism within the past ten years has made our task on campus all the more difficult. We can't find enough liberal allies anymore. Reform-minded liberals, let alone democratic socialists, are too often a curiosity on today's campus.

We often live in the shadows of the 1960s. In some respects, this is an advantage; in others, it's a tremendous burden. Not only are the 1960s student revolts in numerous respects an inspiration, but the sixties still manage to provide us with a lifeline to a more just future. We study Marx with sixties radicals-turned-college-professors, rely on radical democratic and feminist organizational methods developed during the sixties, and sometimes just depend on sixties cultural icons—John Lennon, for example—to remind ourselves that things could be different.

But in other respects, the legacy of the sixties is oppressive. Our peers' antipathy to student radicalism often stems from the perception, rightly or wrongly, that campus radicalism is somehow tied to hedonistic selfishness and irresponsibility. A mythologized vision of Abbie Hoffman has become a bogeyman of sorts: it is assumed that political radicalism necessarily means buying into a Yippie conception of the good life. Admittedly, this reputation probably attracts as many people as it repels, but it remains true that there are more effective and certainly more acceptable outlets for egotistical hedonism on American campuses—four years in a fraternity or sorority, for example, followed by a career, if only imagined, in investment banking.

Today's radical students need to develop an indigenous cultural and political identity, an identity

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that both integrates what is best about our predecessors and goes beyond them. It is precisely for this reason that the sixties remain so problematic for us. In a society in which student radicalism is immediately associated with the activities and achievements of that decade, how do young people today go about developing their own identity? After all, there are features of the sixties movement that aren't useful for us, e.g., its much-discussed sexism. On the other hand, what youth movement can flourish without a hearty dose of generational pride, youthful exuberance, and, yes, utopianism? And it is the sixties student movement that most clearly embodies these features. Perhaps more important, so many of the political issues raised most eloquently by the sixties student movement remain relevant. Isn't the gap between the ideal of democracy and the harsh realities of American society as large as it was twenty years ago?

In spite of the impediments young people on the left face in building a broad movement, there is still much in our history that leaves room for hope and even optimism. Whereas our sixties predecessors were oftentimes products of a highly segregated university environment, our experience has been quite different. Even the most elite of private universities have opened their doors, if only halfway, to blacks, Hispanics, and women, and the American university system is a very different place than it was twenty years ago. It would be absurd to deny that much of campus life is still segregated, or that campus racial relations are often tense. The recurring outbreaks of racist attacks on black students nationwide all too clearly remind us of the depths of campus racism. Still, this is only one side of the coin. At least on some campuses, student radicals began developing a multiracial "rainbow" politics even before the Jackson campaign. If only tentatively, the anti-apartheid movement—still very much alive, as recent protests at Wesleyan and Harvard suggest—has made the most progress in this direction.

Although such experiences remain the exception, for the first time white, black, and Hispanic students are developing close and even long-term working political relationships. We're learning to understand and even get along with each other; and in a nation as racist as our own, that is no easy task.

Similarly, the fact that virtually all educational institutions have opened their doors to women is significant. It is no accident that the sixties movement was deeply sexist. After all, many of its leaders came from elite all-male institutions. The fact that left politics on campus today is often based on consensus-building and participation and not macho posturing and pseudo-confrontation can only be understood as a consequence of the increasingly important role of women in campus politics.

Student radicalism can only gain from the greater pluralism characteristic of contemporary campus life. Indeed, a dose of heterogeneity may be precisely what the doctor ordered for the American left: We *all* need to learn to listen and work with those who don't always talk and look like us.

On the campus left today there may at least be an intimation of what America *could* be—a pluralistic community of equals, democratically pursuing common goals. For a bunch of kids who had the tough luck to grow up during the dreary days of Reaganism, that may not be a bad start. □

Michael Selkin

A Use for Poverty

A society that won't spend the money to keep murderers and rapists behind bars is understandably puzzled about how to deal with nonviolent criminals. We hesitate to toss bribe-takers and stock-manipulators into the pokey with cutthroats and muggers. Yet we know that fines and hours of "community service" are vastly insufficient either to deter or punish. And the country-club minimum-security prisons to which we sometimes send an embezzler or election-rigger mock equally the ideals of rehabilitation and retribution. Sometimes we are left hoping—foolishly, we all realize—that the embarrassment of exposure will sufficiently punish the price-fixers, polluters, and perjurers. But there is something else we could do. We could sentence them to poverty.

I do not mean that we should merely seize their property, for then they would continue to feast on hidden assets; and if not, their families, silent partners, and unindicted co-conspirators would set them up again. I mean that such a criminal should be sentenced, for a term of years or for life, to a more or less extreme level of relative poverty: the equivalent of, say, $4,000 a year, or $8,000, or (for first and relatively minor offenders) $12,000. Nor is it income only that the court would limit; the criminal would be confined to a lifestyle compatible with the imposed level of poverty. He would have to live in housing, and in a neighborhood, that people with that income can find and afford—no sharing of

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daddy's mansion or girlfriend's condo. If the poor have rats and roaches, let him have rats and roaches too.

He would have to dress the way people with that income dress—no "borrowing" a Saville Row suit from his former partner. If the poor are garbed in polyester, let polyester be his raiment also; if a poor man cannot don worsted for an interview, let the criminal, too, go forth in chino. Nor could anyone under such a sentence accept credit beyond, or at better terms than, what would be extended to anyone else at his income level; like other poor people, let him buy always in small quantities, and therefore often at the highest prices.

We would allow the criminal to hold any job he could get and keep. If that seems like coddling, however, ask yourself how many top management positions he is likely to obtain or succeed at when he must show up first for interviews, and then every day, in duds from K-mart or worse—perhaps hand-washed in a rusty sink—and when he is tired from his long trek or three-bus odyssey to reach the corporate tower, still perhaps smelling of his slum? How long can he hold a decent job when he cannot dine with his contacts at the country club or buy them lunch at the fashionable bistro—remember, the firm could not legally pick up the tab—or when he cannot work late for fear of missing the last bus home or of having to walk from bus to tenement or shelter after dark through some valley of the shadow of death?

Of course, making sure that all these rules are followed will require supervision, even investigation, which society will have to provide. By this snooping and bossing around, though, we would only make the criminal's life even more like the lives of the ordinary poor, who must put up with the same prying and pushing around from social workers, bureaucrats, and politicians whenever they need welfare, job training, or medical care. Would this render the program prohibitively expensive? No: for one thing, it would still be cheaper than incarceration; for another, any excess of salary and benefits earned by the criminal over his lifestyle limit should be applied to cover the costs of keeping him in line. Any remainder might be used to compensate the victims of his crimes and, beyond that, for the relief of the deserving poor.

Of course we ought not to condemn the innocent (however much they may have benefited from the criminal conduct) to poverty along with the malefactor. Anyone whose spouse is sentenced to poverty should be entitled to an automatic and immediate divorce, as well as a share of the preforfeiture marital assets. If this provision risks breaking up families, it only makes the resemblance to conventional poverty more striking, for how many impoverished fathers have had to move out so that their loved ones could receive welfare? The supervisors and investigators can make sure here, too, that no surreptitious luxuries are supplied by the former spouse. A spouse who chooses to remain with someone sentenced to poverty would be subjected to the same rules as the criminal—but how often will that happen?

The custody of any minor children will also have to be decided, and I suggest that, in the rare instances where custody is even contested, the children be distributed as they are in cases of surrogate motherhood: the impoverished party is ipso facto unfit, and cannot prevail. Thus, we spare a criminal sentenced to poverty one of the most heart-rending tortures of everyday impoverishment: the knowledge that one is inflicting one's own poverty upon one's children.

This punishment may seem hard, but what is more appropriate than that someone who has impoverished the rest of us by mugging the economic and political system which enables us to enjoy prosperity in freedom should himself suffer some corresponding degree of want? If sentencing a criminal to poverty still seems too cruel, think how we are all, every day, by our actions and by our neglect, by our greed and by our sloth, by what we do and say as individuals, and by our participation in our society and its politics, condemning to equal poverty or worse millions of our fellow human beings, men, women, and children, who have done absolutely nothing wrong. □

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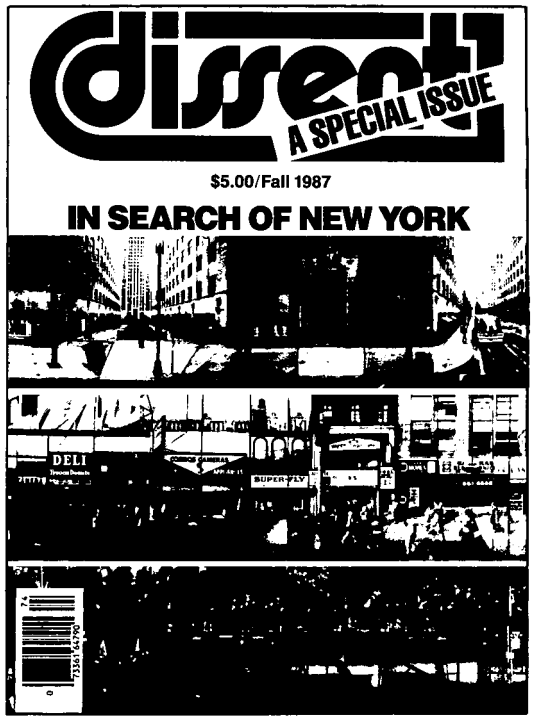

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Adi Ophir

FROM ISRAEL: "MY DECISION TO REFUSE . . ."

We have received a copy of the following letter written by Professor Adi Ophir, who teaches philosophy at the Tel Aviv University, and we print it here for the information of our readers.—EDS.

26 June 1988

Mr. Yitzhak Rabin
Minister of Defense
Hakirya, Tel Aviv

Dear Sir,

Tomorrow, on the 27th of June 1988, I will report to my regular artillery unit for Reserve Duty. Our mission, according to the summons in my possession, is to perform police duties in the West Bank, which include "contact with the local population." I hereby inform you that, regretfully, I will be unable to agree to take part in this mission, and for the first time in almost twenty years of regular and reserve duty in a combat unit, I am compelled to disobey an order.

My decision to refuse is not frivolous. I have given it much thought over a long period of time, and will carry it out with a heavy heart. I am fully aware of the serious implications of refusing military orders in general, and in the IDF in particular. I know that refusal, were it to become a widespread phenomenon, could seriously damage the resilience of the IDF and the cohesion of Israeli society. Nevertheless, I shall refuse. I will refuse because you, sir, and the government in which you serve, leave me no alternative. Permit me to present my reasons.

You call on me to enforce "Law and Order" over a population which seven months ago launched a rebellion against Israeli rule. For the first time since the Six Day War, Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation has become a systematic struggle in which most of the Palestinian population is involved. Palestinian hostility toward Zionism has been long-standing, deeply rooted and dangerous, and must be reckoned with in any future negotiations. But after twenty-one years of Occupation, even though some voices calling for the destruction of Israel can still be heard, the Palestinian rebellion is a fight for freedom, whose only aim is release from Israeli rule.

In the face of popular Palestinian resistance, the IDF, under your leadership, is employing a series of repressive measures which will weigh on national Jewish memory and conscience for many years to come. The boundaries between preventative and punitive action have been obscured. Thousands of persons have been punished arbitrarily without recourse to the standard due process found in societies under proper guidance. Collective punishment, which does grave injustice to innocent people, is a routine practice. Again and again, exaggerated force is used against perpetrators of disorder, children are asphyxiated by "tear gas," infants hit by rubber bullets have lost their eyesight.

Human rights are violated daily in a casual manner in the shadow of the system and by it, in the twilight zone between law and order that has been created by the government of Occupation on the far side of the Green Line, and which is rapidly spreading over this side of the border. Under your command, and to the tempo set by your baton, the IDF is acting in the Territories in accordance with orders, some of which are patently illegal. A continuum of injustice is being carried out, ranging from the vigilantism of the settlers, to soldiers acting out of line, to those who daily imprison dozens of persons without due process. It is in this concert of evil, in which potential performers might find themselves committing war crimes, that I have been called to participate.

From several statements made by you recently, it emerges that, just like some generals in dictatorial regimes sponsored by the United States, you, too, employ the concept of human rights and limits on the use of force merely as code words to avoid possible American pressure. For myself, and my

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friends who have refused or will refuse to serve, these concepts are the fundamental requirements for life in a democratic society and guide the conduct of individuals within it. Today, you demand that I disassociate from this code of conduct and ignore these fundamental duties in the name of "national security"—for which you are responsible; in the name of the law—which in this case is represented by you; and in the name of Israeli democracy. Given the current political situation, all the arguments in support of your demand are invalid.

If the government of Israel was sincerely striving to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and end the Occupation, if it did not systematically ignore the signs and signals of increased moderation and willingness to compromise coming from various quarters on the Palestinian side, it could be argued that the Occupation, even having lost all semblance of "enlightenment," is a necessary evil. If you were to come with a clean conscience and state on behalf of this government that the current acts of oppression, and the Occupation in general, are temporary, to be maintained only until an agreement is reached, you could argue that national security justifies the orders I have received to serve in the occupying force.

But your hands, Mr. Minister, are not clean. You are party to a government which, along the lines set by predecessors, continues to maintain and eternalize the Occupation, not to terminate it. Like its predecessors, this government leaves the Palestinians with no recourse but to use nonpolitical means to win freedom and to realize their right to national self-determination. Until you have, with serious intent, opened legitimate roads for a political struggle to achieve these ends, you have no right, Mr. Minister, to call on me to enforce law and order among the Palestinian people. Under the present circumstances you are not calling on me to defend Israel's security but to participate in the ongoing enslavement of another people.

Therefore, when you come to justify my orders to report for duty, you will be unable to speak in the name of democracy either. Under the aegis of rubber bullets, gas grenades and live ammunition which you want to place in my hands tomorrow, Israeli democracy is controlling the lives of one and a half million Palestinians. No one is more aware than you that we are ruling their lives through the continual denial of basic human rights and without granting them a share in self-government. Between the time you served as prime minister and until you took on the Defense portfolio, this situation has become permanent, and nothing has remained of Israeli democracy save the pretense of the parliamentary game within the Green Line. Even this pretense is crumbling before our very eyes, and you are fully responsible for this through the advanced training you provided to the IDF in the techniques of mass detention and collective punishment, with the Security Service behind the scenes, and the concurrent moral obtuseness overlying all.

The continued occupation is far more threatening to Israeli democracy than my own refusal to serve, or the past or future refusal of my friends. As the process of oppression gains momentum, the constraints and controls of democracy grow weaker. Refusal becomes not only the courageous act of "noble souls"—although it is that too, and I am proud of it—but a uniquely responsible way, almost the only one possible nowadays, of participating in Israeli society.

Our refusal is an attempt to find a foothold and hammer a stake onto the slippery slope between democracy and another form of government. Our act marks a boundary of the erosion of the lines that distinguish between a society whose laws express human transcendence and a society whose laws manifest the basest human elements. We are still far from the bottom of this decline, but we are rapidly nearing it. My refusal, Mr. Rabin, is also justified today because you and your fellow ministers no longer offer sufficient guarantees that we will stop this downward race before we hit rock bottom.

Because of all these reasons, even the need to protect the rule of law cannot justify calling me to duty. Today you and the regime of Occupation, of which you are one of the leaders, are more dangerous to the rule of law than a mass movement of "refuseniks" would be, should it come into existence.

My refusal, Mr. Minister, follows from the values which are the basis of every enlightened rule of law. Recognizing the authority of the rule of law, on the 27th of June 1988, I shall appear at a trial ready to accept my judgment. It is your right according to law, but not according to justice, to instruct my commander to sentence me to prison for refusing a command. It is your duty, according to both law and justice, to reexamine the direction you are leading the army—in which people such as myself turn into "refuseniks"; and the direction you are leading the country—which people like myself serve by refusing to participate in the army of Occupation.

With respect,
Dr. Adi Ophir
Jerusalem □

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Steven Seidman

THE CASE OF ANTIGAY POLITICS

The Failure of the Left

Between 1977 and 1986 there occurred a sweeping assault upon gays and their culture. Sadly, the left failed to respond to this offensive. This was not an episodic lapse but an abiding failure of the left to take homosexual politics and oppression seriously.

By the late 1970s an organized antigay backlash was in motion, spearheaded initially from the New Right. Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" (SOC) campaign in Dade County, Florida, sparked a wave of antigay actions. Backed by fundamentalist religious groups SOC portrayed homosexuals as a threat to children, the family, and national security, violating the laws of God, Nature, and Society. In 1977, the SOC campaign succeeded in repealing a local gay rights ordinance. In 1978, gay rights ordinances were repealed in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota; Wichita, Kansas; and Eugene, Oregon. In the same year state Senator Briggs introduced Proposition 6 in California. It would have forbidden the employment of teachers who are homosexual or who "advocate" homosexuality, giving schools the authority to fire these teachers. Although the Briggs initiative was defeated, a similar bill passed in Oklahoma. The most important effort at antigay legislation came at the federal level, where Senator Paul Laxalt introduced the Family Protection Act. It stipulated that "no federal funds may be made available . . . to any public individual or private individual, group, foundation, commission, corporation, association . . . which presented homosexuality . . . as an alternative . . . acceptable lifestyle." Gay people could have been fired from all government or government funded jobs, and made ineligible for Social Security, welfare, veteran's benefits, and student assistance; and, further, any organization that publicly accepted homosexuality would have been ineligible for government assistance. Equally menacing was Resolution 1666 introduced into Congress by Representative Larry McDonald. It would have prohibited homosexual acts from ever receiving protected status under the law. The aim behind these antigay initiatives was to drive homosexuals back into social invisibility.

Although the Family Protection Act and Resolution 1666 were defeated, they helped shape a political and ideological context in which antigay themes became an integral part of New Right ideology and politics.

The poison quickly spread from the New Right to mainstream conservatism. Nationally prominent conservatives endorsed the antigay campaign. In a *National Review* editorial, Patrick Buchanan remarked, "In a healthy society, it [homosexuality] will be contained, segregated, controlled, and stigmatized, carrying both a legal and social sanction." George Will defended the antigay campaigns on the grounds that the acceptance of homosexuality represents the "moral disarmament of society." Essays in *Commentary* by Samuel McCracken and Midge Decter spread antigay militancy.

By the early 1980s, the conservative offensive against gay people appeared to be losing some momentum. The Family Protection Act, resubmitted in 1981, failed to gain congressional approval. The Briggs initiative was defeated. Gay rights ordinances were successfully defended or enacted (e.g., in New York City). Unfortunately, the AIDS epidemic reinvigorated the antigay crusade, "proving" the pathological character of homosexuality, hence legitimating homosexual oppression.

The Democratic Left's Response

The antigay backlash did not sweep across the U.S. without opposition. Witness the failure of the New Right to enact its antigay agenda. Resistance by the gay community has been crucial. Furthermore, gay people have been able to count on the organizational and ideological support of the democratic left. For example, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has been in the vanguard of defending gay rights. On the ideological front, the

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"Save Our Children" crusade has been criticized by liberals and the left.

Unfortunately, liberal support for gay people has frequently been overly cautious and, at times, absent. For example, the prestigious Leadership Conference on Civil Rights repeatedly turned down an application by the National Gay Task Force for membership until 1982. The American Bar Association declined in 1980 to affirm that the constitutional right to privacy extends to homosexuals. The National Education Association opposed the 1978 Briggs Initiative but made no comparable effort to fight a similar bill banning gays from public school employment that passed in Oklahoma one year later. Although the American Psychiatric Association reversed itself in 1973 by withdrawing homosexuality from its list of personality disorders, there is currently a strong push in the opposite direction. In *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry* (1981), Ronald Bayer concluded that "a vast majority of psychiatrists continue to view homosexuality as a pathological condition. . . . [T]he possibility of a reversal [of the 1973 decision] cannot be dismissed."

Liberal intellectuals have given ground all too easily to the conservative offensive. Writing in the *Nation* in 1979, Doug Ireland observed, among other examples, that "Jimmy Breslin last month wrote a column in the *New York Daily News* attacking the *Village Voice* for running a special supplement on 'gay life,' asserting that the *Voice* editors had turned a once-great publication into a 'fag paper'. . . . the *New Yorker* . . . does not accept gay advertising."

Writing in 1977, Paul Robinson suggested in the *New Republic* that the antigay backlash is less a reaction to the demand for legal rights than to the visibility of gays. In fact, Robinson held that gays themselves are less interested in legislative reform than in gaining visibility as part of their push for social acceptance. Robinson argued that homosexuality conjured up "penises in mouths and anuses" and that was enough to make heterosexuals hysterical. Accordingly, since homosexuals are not discriminated against so long as they conceal their homosexuality, he advised them to give up their drive for social acceptance. This only succeeds in narrowing public tolerance. "Discretion has always been a better defense of gay rights than the law will ever be." In effect, Robinson recommended that gays renounce the ideal of an integrated and healthy life in exchange for a modicum of public tolerance.

There is, however, little reason to believe that discretion promotes public tolerance. Indeed, in the 1950s being discrete left homosexuals easy prey. Public tolerance is not something granted by heterosexuals but won by homosexuals through public struggle on a variety of political and cultural fronts.

An ambivalent response to the antigay backlash has been characteristic, as well, of the socialist left. This conclusion is supported by research I did of four major left publications—*Dissent, In These Times, Radical America,* and *Socialist Review*. In simply quantitative terms the coverage of the antigay backlash between 1977 and 1986 is revealing. *Radical America* published just three pieces on the antigay backlash over this ten-year period. *Dissent* maintained an uninterrupted silence except for one short critical piece on Midge Decter's *Commentary* essay. Neither *Radical America* nor *Dissent* published anything on AIDS and its impact on gay people. *In These Times,* a weekly newspaper, published just five short pieces on the antigay backlash. Its first report on AIDS appeared in September 1982 and through 1986 it published four minor pieces on AIDS. The one exception to this generally dismal record is the *Socialist Review*. It published six major essays on homosexual politics and life.

On the positive side, when the left has addressed the issue it has consistently defended gay rights. Furthermore, the left has pushed the analysis of gay oppression beyond issues of discrimination or the absence of civil rights. Yet the left has, at times, retreated from demands by gays for the acceptance of homosexuality on an equal footing with heterosexuality. There are a number of examples, but I shall limit myself to one: Jean Bethke Elshtain's "Homosexual Politics: The Paradox of Gay Liberation," published in *Salmagundi,* Vols. 58–59, 1982–3. Elshtain is something of a maverick but her writings have appeared in major left publications (including *Dissent*) and her views articulate one current of post-New Left critical theory.

Elshtain endorses the protection of homosexuals from harassment by the state and other citizens. Her polemic is directed against a gay liberationist ideology, which is aimed "not simply at the removal of prejudicial and discriminatory laws and practices but at the full 'legitimation' of the homosexual identity and 'lifestyle.' " By claiming the status of an oppressed minority or class and insisting that the state make amends for a history of discrimination, liberationists, says Elshtain, propose an agenda that would give gays a privileged position and legitimate further intrusion of the state into private affairs. Liberationists thus inadvertently promote a bureaucratic statist society in which individual rights and

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democratic opposition are jeopardized. As I read her, Elshtain is not criticizing the state apparatus as a force of homosexual oppression but homosexuals' effort to enlist the state to struggle against oppression.

In fact, Elshtain argues that at least some gay liberationists want more than social acceptance. They "conjure up a world in which everyone has become gay, or in which homosexuality is the preferred mode of sexual identity," and are romantic revolutionaries who project a "future society in which all distinctions have been eliminated, long-term relationships repudiated, and polymorphous perversity on demand legislated into existence." Gay liberationists, then, pose a threat to society either by promoting an authoritarian statist order or by unleashing a socially destructive hedonism or because their hidden agenda is to establish a "homosexual dictatorship."

Elshtain defends the extension of basic civil rights to gays but not their right to participate in society as equal members. Of course, this leaves homosexuals in a marginal and quasi-deviant status. Her critique of gay liberationism is, in the end, a response to the demands by homosexuals for public acceptance and social inclusion, displaying the penetration of backlash themes into left thinking.

The question needs to be asked: why the silence or the ambivalence on the part of the left toward homosexual oppression? At least three considerations seem pertinent. First, the continued dominance on the left of heterosexual men is crucial. Like any privileged group, they naturalize their source of empowerment and are threatened by any challenge to it. In this regard, the heterosexual male left frequently partakes of the general homophobia of our heterosexist society.

Second, the left's insensitivity to homosexual oppression is related to the continued dominance of Marxism in left culture. Marxism highlights issues relating to the public sphere (economy and state) and devalues issues of sex, gender, and the family in the private sphere. Under the influence of Marxism, the left still identifies the workplace as the primary site of social conflict and the working class as the major agent of social change. Only grudgingly have issues of race and gender penetrated left ideology and politics. Sexuality is still seen as a personal, nonpolitical topic.

Finally, the left's failure to seriously consider homosexual and, in general, sexual oppression reflects an often critical view of recent changes in socioerotic patterns. Many leftists are critical of the trend toward an ethic of sexual pleasure and expression for promoting instrumental and dehumanizing forms of intimate life. The preoccupation with sexual fulfillment diverts attention from important social and political issues and the quest for erotic satisfaction replaces the project of social change. For example, in *One-Dimensional Man* Marcuse assails the "sexual revolution" for promoting a narrow genital-centered, performance-oriented sexuality. He maintains that sex has become a mode of work or a performance to be judged in terms of technical criteria of competence in producing and sustaining orgasmic pleasure. Individuals are reduced to bodies; the erotic exchange becomes impersonal and uncaring. Applied to gay people, this left analysis suggests a critique of the commercialization of sex in gay life; it would see in gay patterns of nonmonogamous sex the conquest of the economizing or instrumental behavioral logic of capitalism.

The left, in particular the male-dominated heterosexual left, has not seriously addressed the realities of homosexual oppression. It must learn to see gays as oppressed in ways no less psychologically and socially meaningful than the poor, the working class, ethnic and racial groups, women, the disabled, and the elderly. Homosexuals are oppressed because their sexual/affectional preference violates a sex/gender order that privileges heterosexuality and takes heterosexuality as a basis from which to claim masculine gender dominance. Homosexuals are oppressed by discriminatory practices and laws, by a culture that stigmatizes them as deviant figures, and by the double life and marginality that is often their fate. Although feminists have placed issues of sexual and homosexual oppression on the left agenda, feminism remains primarily a theory and politics of gender. Its relationship to movements of sexual liberation has always been ambivalent. In the context of an antigay backlash and the AIDS crisis it is imperative that the left begin to rethink the place of sexuality, especially homosexuality, in its critical discourse and politics.□

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Jeremy Larner

MEDIA CLIPPINGS

It never fails. The man who survives the nutty primary system and wins the Democratic nomination is hailed for a while as a media genius—and his staff is full of geniuses, too. It happened to McGovern, Carter, and Mondale—and now it's happening to Michael Dukakis.

The worst result is that the candidate's staff believes this stuff, and goes through the campaign giving Pat Caddell-like interviews about polls and strategy. Reporters love these stories because they seem like inside stuff compared to the sameness of campaigning. But there's no political meat in such news: all that results is that the candidate is made to appear as a schemer. (Cf., the campaign stories from the camp of Jimmy Carter.)

Democrats are more prone to "strategy" stories than Republicans—both Nixon and Reagan were good at lying low and giving out little while campaigning. The reporters liked traveling with the Democrats better—and served them worse.

By election day, the presidency will be decided on how pleased the electorate is with the status quo of the country—and on what they take to be the characters of the candidates. I'm not even sure tv ads count much anymore—because viewers are hip to them. What won for Reagan was his appearance of confidence, his genuine liking for himself. Dukakis, in his own way, gives something of that same feeling—and that may count more than anything his aides and pollsters tell the press.

The Screen and TV Writers' Strike

The recent 23-week screen and tv writers' strike was poorly reported in the media. Viewers miss their shows; reporters resent screenwriters who they think are living on the gravy train. Obviously some screenwriters make large fees. But the average writer waits a long time between paydays and averages less money than a newspaper reviewer. He is subject to delays, misrepresentations, and firings that have nothing to do with what he writes. Management has given the "author" credit to the directors, along with more power and prestige, diminishing the writer's chance of seeing his work done well—and probably making most movies worse. (Perhaps you remember "Zeferelli's *Romeo and Juliet*"?)

In the Reagan years, the studios, like other bosses, scored a series of victories over the screen craft unions, which have some sympathies with one another but do not act in concert. Since the early seventies, the royalties accruing to tv sales of movies have been paid out by a formula based on gross distribution. This guaranteed that 1.2 percent of tv sales would go to the writer or writers of a picture. With cassette sales, it was a different story. The studios were deducting "costs," and dividing only net, which meant that writers received just one-fifth of the royalties they figured they had coming. Three years ago, at the end of a long strike, the case had almost reached arbitration with the NLRB, but the television writers—who far outnumber the movie writers—were threatening to go back to work. With one day to go, the divided leadership of the writers' union dropped the arbitration—losing billions in future cassette royalties—in return for a contribution to its failing health fund.

Tremendous bitterness resulted from this defeat. In the past three years the union reconstructed itself, and when the current contract ran out, went into a strike with relative unity. The studios, meanwhile, figured they were entitled to keep pressing for rollbacks. The result has been a long and bitter stalemate.

The key issue this time was worldwide tv residuals, an issue which affects the majority of tv writers rather than the minority of screenwriters. The final result was debatable, saving face for both sides, granting minimal increases, "opening doors" for future negotiations: possibly not worth the money and jobs lost during the strike—at least that is the conclusion among many screenwriters.

The screenwriters did gain an improved formula for taking back their original screenplays if unproduced after five years. Up to now, it has been all too

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easy for studios to sit on them, and not risk embarrassment by letting another studio do them. It will now be very slightly less difficult.

Of more relevance to the non-writer is the fact of billions of dollars now pouring in from worldwide syndication of American tv shows. Now, wherever you are in the world, Africa, Europe, or South America, you can turn on your tv set and see dubbed "Dallas," dubbed "Dynasty," or lesser American serials. This is what creates the pot of royalties the broadcasters and studios are reluctant to share. But it also signifies the obliteration of local culture by a more synthetic American product.

When you travel around the world, you will still meet people from different traditions, but their immediate cultural background via tv and movies will overlap with that of the Americans around us back home. There's that much less "there" there, less all the time.

A famous Italian director, Ettore Scola, told me there are no chances for younger Italian directors and writers to create film careers. Scola, and a few others like him, can still release their pictures and continue what is arguably the greatest national film tradition. But when I was in Rome a year ago, all of the major movie houses were playing slick American violence flicks, like *Rambo*.

A Movie of Violence

Colors is a picture which falls into the above category. Really it comes from a long tradition of American pictures in which the camera relishes shooting and death far beyond the needs of the ostensible story. The best thing in the picture is Haskell Wexler's cinematography, which shows us an East Los Angeles there is never any need for nonresidents to see. I especially recall a chase scene in which cars race shooting at one another down back alleys, ploughing through mountains of debris which the people have cast from their houses. The worst part of the picture is that nothing else in it registers as a believable alternative to the nihilistic concept of honor lived out by the L.A. shooting gangs. Both boys and cops call one another "Homes," making a dismal point about interchangeability, and establishing this as the first picture in which all characters have the same name. The young impetuous cop, Sean Penn, is supposed to be redeemed by the death of the older, more restrained one, Robert Duvall, but their scenes are so poor it's hard to tell whether the movie-makers put much faith in this cliched redemption—in which case, why have it? Penn and Duvall, excellent actors, mumble their lines as if embarrassed.

Why then did *Colors* gross millions? I think it appealed to the youthful sense of going all the way. The killings really are senseless, and mostly are not pretended to be anything else. Then, too, far more of the youthful audience comes to laugh at movies like *Colors* than to start a shoot-out. The younger generation does not take the American movie product nearly as seriously as critics do. They like the thrill of horror and death, plus the fun of mocking the fatuity they see. Do these movies bear a relation to the world around us? I think most viewers under thirty would answer that thought with a snicker, and they're right—except for the fact that the movies themselves *are* part of that world.

The Glories of Cable

A more real-seeming experience can be had sitting with a remote control in one's hand and fifty cable channels available on the screen. The world of news, entertainment, past, present, media images, etc., lies at the flick of a thumb, with no need anymore to watch a single commercial. Cable tv is the poor man's equivalent of a computer modem, bringing an immense range of fabricated reality to his passive control. As a rule nothing is watched all the way through; the feeling is one of absorbing many things at once. Already accessories are being offered to open up "windows" on the tv screen, so we can watch two channels at the same time.

A New York high school principal tells me she can't drop the remote control wand once she picks it up. The addictive power is such that she dares not have a cable tv in her house. But on the road, at hotels, she sits fascinated, unable to break away from the reality that many of her pupils experience every night. □

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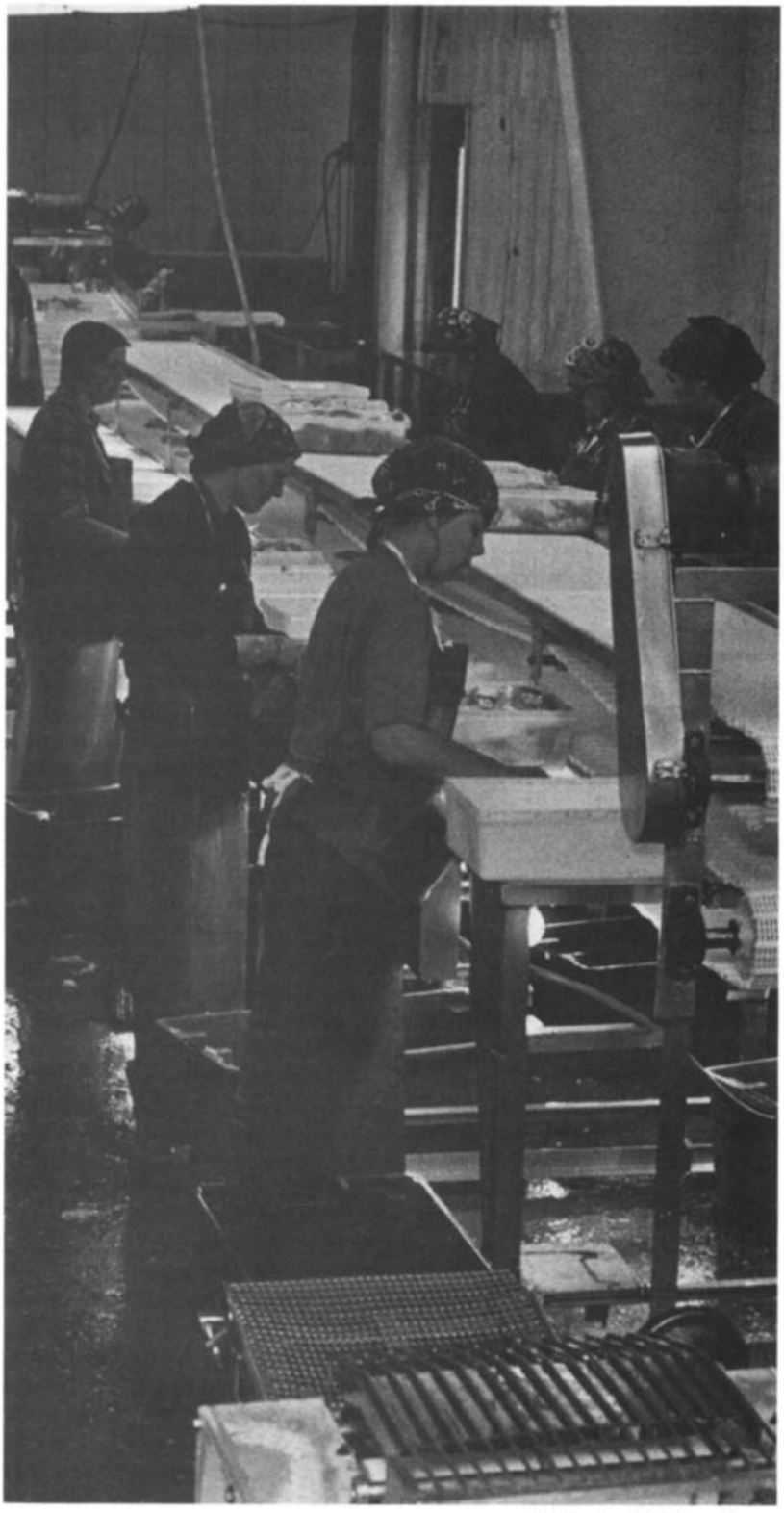

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E.P. Thompson

THE MIND OF A HISTORIAN

POWER AND CULTURE: ESSAYS ON THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS, by Herbert G. Gutman, edited by Ira Berlin. New York: Pantheon, 1987. 452 pp. $29.95.

Here is a rich book—a dozen essays, of uneven quality, some hitherto unpublished, some published in inaccessible places, which, taken together, offer a conspectus of Herbert Gutman's energetic genius. Yet the volume would seem shapeless and sprawling—now labor struggles in the Gilded Age, now coal miners on the prairie, now the post-emancipation efforts of black communities to found and support their own schools—if it were not for the introductory study by the book's editor, Ira Berlin.

This seventy-page essay is outstanding, a model of what such a study ought to be but almost never is. This is far more than a conventional tribute paid to a friend and fellow scholar. Berlin has read with care all of Gutman's published and much of his unpublished work; he places it in its context, evaluates it, provides necessary intellectual biography, assesses, commends, praises, and on occasion criticizes. In doing this with such clarity and honesty, Berlin has not only given unity and focus to this collection, he has also written a major study in recent intellectual history.

He has, furthermore, given a more analytical account of Gutman's historiographical "project"—of the direction and parameters of his work—than anything given to us by Gutman himself. This may be considered by the sophisticated upthrusting generation to be disgraceful, and to be yet one more illustration of the theoretical immaturity of the historical profession of yesteryear. If Gutman was a major historian—as so many of his contemporaries insist—where are the conceptual breakthroughs? If these are "essays on the American Working Class," where is the essay that defines the nature of "class"? If his work was about "power" and "culture," where are these two concepts ratified and defined?

Confronted by the rigorous inquisition of today's aspirant theorists, Gutman does not come out of it too well. He started publishing late. He did not plan his *oeuvre* as a real historian—let us say Foucault—would do: one mighty general study after another, the results already known (and arriving from some ulterior theoretical area) in advance of the research, and the research performed by obedient assistants in order to illustrate the theses. Gutman muddled into arguments, which grew into articles too long to be published, went into bottom drawers, were dug out and rewritten, grew even longer, and in some cases had to be rescued and shaped by editors or publisher. (He was fortunate to find in Pantheon a publisher both strongly supportive and intellectually adventurous.) So far from knowing always where he was going—what his conclusions would or ought to be—he suffered from prolonged writing blocks and depressions. Writing was never easy for him and sometimes his early drafts buried the reader in a reiteration of examples. If he wished to demonstrate a contested point conclusively, he would do this, not by elegant formulations but by emptying a whole sack of confirmatory evidence upon the reader's head.

Gutman could not meet with my notional critic's approval. Yet, viewed from another aspect, Gutman was one of the most critically alert historians of our time. His blocks and depressions, his rewritings and polemics, were, exactly, testimony to this critical engagement with the past—reformulating old historical problems and proposing new ones, questioning received texts and their stereotypes, experimenting with novel methodologies, reading widely in adjacent disciplines (ethnography, demography, sociology) in search of new ways of decoding slave cultural inheritances or artisan work customs.

If musicians or artists are "born" before they are trained, then it may not be unreasonable to suppose that there is such a thing as a historical sense, a sense with which Herb Gutman was endowed in superabundance. I do not know in what part of the cranium phrenologists place the "historical imagination" or with which faculties it is associated, but one could not be in Herb's company for half an hour

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without being astounded at his restless and inquisitive historical consciousness, his superb capacity for empathy with the "anonymous"workers of the past to whom he gave back voices and identities. Add to this a craftsman's appetite for the archives and a trained skill in interrogating the text, and one is some way towards itemizing his qualities.

I think of his working life as being spent in a kind of *wrestling,* and this collection exemplifies this stance. His favored mode was dialogue. He situated himself between the evidence and the received historiography and made them interrogate each other. He tried out his ideas (and read aloud his latest finds) in a ceaseless dialogue with friends, colleagues, graduates, and with his wife and fellow historian, Judy. His prose flowed most readily when he was engaged in polemic, and several of the studies in this collection had their origin in this kind of engagement: his polemic against stereotyped views of general working-class assent to the values of the Gilded Age, his polemic against models of the "breakdown" of immigrant cultures and traditions.

If this is not theoretically informed history, then I do not know what that can be. The interventions were always in sensitive and significant areas. There is the tumultuous (and sometimes hilarious) polemic against Fogel and Engerman's *Time on the Cross,* published as *Slavery and the Numbers Game* (and some part republished here), and first appearing in the *Journal of Negro History* in 1975. What is difficult to remember now is the ecstatic terms in which *Time on the Cross* had been received on almost all sides, at a time when "cliometrics" was carrying all before it. The critique of *Time on the Cross* was a decisive check to the excessive claims of the quantifiers and to their uncritical reception.

Gutman himself was in no way hostile to sophisticated techniques of counting, as several studies in the book demonstrate. But he showed that no elaboration of statistical techniques could displace the need for historical logic—the asking of intelligent and appropriate questions—nor could the computer somehow sanitize the evidence and provide a positivist guarantee against the infiltration of ideological assumptions. He was acutely aware of the way in which the ideological premises of the present put down roots in the form of falsified histories, in a self-fulfilling procedure by which one feeds the other.

The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom found its source in precisely such a polemic, in this case against Daniel P. Moynihan's report on the racial crisis in American cities, in which much is set down as caused by the "deterioration of the Negro family," which in its turn is given a historical explanation in the "deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American," created by slavery and segregation. This gave to Gutman a thesis against which his research proposed antitheses. "To argue, as I am doing," he wrote to me, "that blacks—even as slaves—'made their own history'. . . is to quarrel with 3/4ths of a century of terrible scholarship mired in class and race bias." It also led him to his own countertheses. In the book (he explained) "slavery is described as an adaptive experience, and . . . the blacks are viewed as a special instance of a working-class population."

Yet even when Gutman arrived at theses, these were not carefully crafted and given dogmatic finality. In this book one can certainly find definitions of culture, class and class formation, and the rest. But these appear seriatim, in the course of argument and critique, rather than as System. They are not, in my view, the worse for that; indeed, when theory is presented as critique, it acquires definition and clarity. But what leaves some readers dissatisfied is that Gutman offers every finding as provisional, every definition as imperfect and awaiting refinement, every conclusion as open-ended and under the profession's review. Even here, in *Power & Culture,* there are several places where he reviews and revises his own earlier work, or accepts, with frankness and generosity—perhaps, in his interview with Mike Merrill, accepts too easily?—the criticisms of others.

This was a quality in him that was admired by his fellow historians. His open, strenuously argumentative, self-critical style, his way of proposing new questions and agendas, made for stimulating seminars and for memorable interventions at conferences. There was nothing smooth or self-defensive about this style. Its vigorous interrogatives had a way of leaping over barriers of language and of culture. My wife, Dorothy, and I visited several history departments in Chinese universities in 1985, a year or so after a group of American scholars, which included Herb, had been through. The impression he had made was profound, and at every place they were scheming to get him back. He had conveyed, not so much a method—perhaps they have enough methods and too many answers?—but an antimethod: stop looking for answers and start looking for the right questions.

When I speak of "antimethod" I do not mean lack of theoretical concern or of consistency. I mean, rather, resistance to conceptual closures and to the reification of findings into systems. Perhaps provisionality and open-endedness was itself his method?

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Nowhere is this more clearly presented than in the interview (for the Radical Historians Organization, MARHO) undertaken by Mike Merrill and included in this volume.

The interview form can be a lazy one. But Merrill is a gifted interviewer, an able historian, and he prepares his interviews with comprehensive reading and with a careful selection of points of pressure. The passage where Merrill is trying to clarify Gutman's allegiances and his relation to Marxist historiography deserves to be quoted at length:

> Q: How does the new labor history answer the question, "Why has there been no mass socialist movement in the United States?"
>
> GUTMAN: I don't think that is a well-put historical question. We need to put aside notions that workers' movements have developed properly elsewhere and in the United States they developed improperly. We need to put aside the English model, the French model, and the Cuban model, and then ask a set of very, very tough questions about what American workers actually thought and did—and why . . . .
>
> Q: Based on your work for before 1900 and on [David] Montgomery's for the period after 1900, can you make judgments about whether or not workers' movements in these periods were adequate to the historical tasks they faced if they were to achieve their political goals?
>
> GUTMAN: I don't think that way as a historian. What does it mean to talk about historical tasks that workers faced? We are letting in through the back door a notion of fixed and predetermined historical development. We are measuring the American worker (or the French worker or the Polish worker) against an ideal type. That is the Whig fallacy of history once again.
>
> Q: It is not just the Whig fallacy. Some would call it the Marxist fallacy.
>
> GUTMAN: Yes, there is a Marxist variant of the Whig fallacy. It comes from an essentialist view of workers or the working class, one that emphasizes a predetermined pattern of historical development.
>
> Q: But some would argue that such a notion is central to classical Marxism.
>
> GUTMAN: And it contains within it dangerous notions of vanguard leadership and vanguard parties . . . .
>
> Q: But vanguard parties are not central to the vision of classical Marxism, the Marxism of Marx. What is central is some notion of historical progress and some direction to history. What is left of Marxism, in your view, when you have stripped away this aspect?
>
> GUTMAN: What is left when you clear away the determinist and teleological elements is good questions that direct your attention to critical ways of looking at ongoing historical processes . . . .

This does not seem to me to be evasive. Gutman's refusal to be tied in with any "notion of fixed and predetermined historical development" is a defense of the discipline of history. The historian's object is, in part, to "understand" history—that is, to answer relevant questions that are appropriate to the evidence. To this Gutman adds less manifest functions:

> The central value of historical understanding is that it transforms historical givens into historical contingencies. It enables us to see the structures in which we live and the inequality people experience as only one among many other possible experiences. By doing that, you free people for creative and critical (or radical) thought.

The argument is that historical understanding liberates the mind from the fatalism that both ignorance and an inert capitulation to determinism bring: "Once you surrender the fixed older forms of historical explanation and process, the future becomes open. It then becomes even more important to analyze and examine the history of those structures and ideologies that shape our lives."

But neither the "goals" of history nor history's "meaning" are inscribed within "history" itself. These are premises imported by the historical observer—and legitimately imported if the contraband is not concealed. The premises of Gutman are those of democratic socialism, revealed on page after page in his interest in working-class self-activity and in mutuality. To this one might add a respect for the "anonymous" individual and her/his experience. Nothing drove him more swiftly to polemic than the contemptuous dismissal of the experiences of "ordinary" working people, whether it came from modernizers or Marxists or quantifiers or intellectual elitists. He expected to find that any individual would turn out to be extraordinary.

I notice that some commentators assume that Gutman's style of history, and its reception, belong in some way to the radical 1960s as one of the fashions of that time. This suggests an activity more ephemeral and less solidly constructed than is revealed in this volume. There is *something* in it, but only if we see the 1960s as more contradictory than the stereotypes propose. For one thing, some of the "New Left" intelligentsia did not want to know about working-class history at all. At the end of that decade Herb wrote to Dorothy and me about a talk he gave to the Socialist Scholars Conference:

> It was a disaster—to put it mildly. The young radicals would have none of this kind of "history." The responses were wild, not mild, and some were very angry because I had obfuscated the criminal character of our entire history by talking about work habits, culture, etc. There is a very real need for such persons to believe that this has always been a culture dominated by the industrial-military complex. Their alienation from the

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present drives them to reject the past in its entirety. The American past is the unredeeming saga of a mixture of corporate exploitation, all-pervasive racism, and a compliant and corrupted working-class and radical movement. It is almost as if Mayor Daley and the Chicago police landed at Plymouth Rock and as if agents for General Motors dumped the tea in Boston Harbor.

This makes it clear that Gutman was not some ephemeral radical culture hero. At the same time, he was a staunch and active supporter of the civil rights movement and the opposition to the Viet Nam war, and he admired many of the initiatives of SDS. His letter to us continued: "I have a group of really fine graduate students [at Rochester]. . . . The young American "new left" is not the monolith that popularizers have made of it. Among these dedicated young people are a number deeply committed to serious social history and torn between that commitment and an equally strong desire to alter this society."

What made Herb growl was the limitless capacity of the intelligentsia to write off working-class initiatives within elaborately theorized systems—structures or determinisms—from whose compulsions only they, the intelligentsia, are supposed to be exempt. What made him growl even louder was when intellectuals theorized such compulsions in radical or Marxist rhetoric, offering conservative or defeatist ideology in fancy leftist dress. (This is in fact one leading form that reaction takes today on many campuses—sometimes in the fancy dress of Marxism or of "critical theory"—whose strategy is to show that all, except a small number of initiated theorists, are unfree.) It concerned him that such defeatism (and fear of all "populism") blocked the channels of communication between the campus and the general public.

Americans' loss of historical memory is the theme of the final chapter. He was concerned, as the poet Thomas McGrath has been concerned (although expressed in different terms), that, in the eastern United States, "history no longer functions, has been forgotten, has been 'paved over.' In the East man begins every day for himself." In Gutman's words there was a "vast distance" separating "working historians and other American intellectuals—and, indeed, ordinary Americans of all kinds." In his last few years Gutman did more and more, through summer schools with trade unionists, through the American Social History Project (a project that continues), and through efforts at some popular synthesis of the "new" history, to open the clogged channels of communication. But he did not overlook the fact that some of the loss of historical memory was self-willed and owed as much to the self-suppression of an alienated and privileged "left" as to the ideologically motivated amnesia of the "right."

If I have not entered into a close discussion of several of the themes in this book, that is because it would have taken me beyond my competence. But there is one matter within my competence where I must dissent from Ira Berlin's excellent introduction. Rather too often throughout it there is reference to the "Thompsonian" influence upon Gutman. One would not suppose, from this account, that the influence was very much two-way, and should more properly be called a dialogue. When I was first invited by Herb for several weeks to Buffalo in 1966 I did not go there as an instructor. On the contrary, from my first arrival at the airport I was immersed in debate, and was subjected to an intense course of instruction in American labor historiography. Our dialogue soon took in many others, on both sides of the Atlantic, so that it would be possible to chart, not a Thompsonian influence, but an Anglo-American impulse in social history. Nor is there any warrant for identifying this as "Thompsonian culturalism"—"culturalism" is a term that Herb and I always refused, a spurious term invented by systematizers whose business it is to rigidify differences and to set up specious boundaries between approaches that are perfectly compatible. Gutman never proposed that there was only One True Method of history—indeed, one of my strongest recollections is of the generosity and enthusiasm with which he would commend the work of scholars whose approach might differ from his own.

I should add that *Power & Culture* includes an excellent checklist of Herbert Gutman's published writings, prepared by Andrew Gyory. It is an important and necessary book, but not one to read at a single sitting. The essays should be savored one at a time. And pondered. □

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Murray Hausknecht

Generational Conflict And Left Politics

THE SIXTIES: YEARS OF HOPE, DAYS OF RAGE, by Todd Gitlin. New York: Bantam Books, 1987. 513 pp. $19.95.

"DEMOCRACY IS IN THE STREETS": FROM PORT HURON TO THE SIEGE OF CHICAGO, by James Miller. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987. 431 pp. $19.95.

IF I HAD A HAMMER . . .: THE DEATH OF THE OLD LEFT AND THE BIRTH OF THE NEW LEFT, by Maurice Isserman. New York: Basic Books, 1987. 259 pp. $18.95.

The subtitle of Todd Gitlin's book about the sixties, *Years of Hope, Days of Rage,* echoes the famous tag, "the best of times, the worst of times." It was an intensely political time and for some the memory shines with nostalgic glow; others remember it as quite the worst of times. Each memory suppresses the other, and what is needed, but hard, is to see both.

It was also a time of significant cultural changes inseparable from politics: a shift in sexual mores, beginnings of the women's movement, the spread of casual drug use, changes in popular music. Gitlin reports that early SDSers followed Bob Dylan's career "as if he were singing our song; we got in the habit of asking where he was taking us next." The radical politics of those years cannot be understood apart from what came to be called "the counterculture."

But "radical" is too simple a rubric under which to group events that run from the sit-ins of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in 1960 and end with the violent Weathermen. The term "New Left" also conjures up too neat an image, since by the end of 1965 there is in the Students for a Democratic Society an "old guard" who exercise no decisive influence on its policies—the New Left has become by now a different kind of New Left. We cannot usefully think of the sixties as if they were a unitary whole.

That much is clear from Gitlin and from James Miller's *Democracy is in the Streets*, though their focus, while overlapping, is different. Gitlin, part of the SDS old guard and now a sociologist at Berkeley, takes his political biography as a baseline for a fine, wide-ranging analysis of the student movement and its relations to the cultural events of the time. Miller was a demonstrator in the streets of Chicago in 1968 and has previously written a book on Rousseau's political theory. If Gitlin's work is a sociocultural analysis, Miller's is acute intellectual history.

The differences between the New Left at the beginning and the end of the sixties prompt questions about what happened in between and to what extent the beginning foreshadowed the end. And what made the New Left "new"?

By the middle fifties American left-wing parties had all but disappeared. The collapse of this ideological old left and the early stirrings of the New Left is the subject of Maurice Isserman's *If I Had a Hammer*. . . . Isserman, a historian who has written a book about the Communist party, offers a fair and thoughtful story of the radical situation from the end of World War II to the early sixties. He shows that the disintegration of the Communist party after the Khrushchev revelations had already begun under the impact of the Cold War, the passing of Earl Browder from the leadership, and McCarthyism. Elsewhere on the left, a once- or semi-Trotskyist group under Max Shachtman merged with the Socialist party. Sectarianism triumphed in this union, and whatever political potentialities this merger had soon disappeared.

With the collapse of the organized old left, there was a "missing generation." The new generation of the sixties was politically unanchored; it had few if any connections with groups that had earlier formed the American left. Without such anchorage political principles and ideas remain wholly theoretical; unexposed to the realities of everyday political life, thought becomes "mere ideology." Some consequences of having only a tenuous connection to a living radical tradition soon became apparent in SDS.

The membership was young; they were, after all, *Students* for a Democratic Society. "Youth" designates chronological age, and this implies that the experiences of the young in modern societies are different from those of their elders. And soon the differences between the two experiences unavoidably produce generational conflict.

"Youth," however, also suggests "youthfulness," a quality or spirit, a tangle of many strands of feeling and thought: unbounded optimism and self-confidence, an eagerness for adventure, an impatience with the world, a keen moral commitment, a conviction that one understands more deeply than those trapped in existing institutions, a yearning for transcendent experiences, a desire for intense social relationships—all bound together by highly charged libidinous energies.

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The association of youthfulness with chronological youth is not invariable. Cultural wisdom is full of patronizing allusions to those who "retain their youthful idealism" as well as approving recognitions of those "wise beyond their years." We approve of the latter because they have been successfully socialized; unqualified youthfulness suggests that the task of directing energies into approved channels has not yet been completed.

Socialization is the elders' attempt to transmit the fruits of their experience. Typically, the more experience a person has had, the greater his or her appreciation of the need to curb and channel desires and passions. But such knowledge, "learned from experience," is rejected by the spirit of youthfulness as an attempt to impose dull restraints, and this resistance then sharpens generational conflict. The elders see this rejection as a challenge to their authority: their "wisdom" is being questioned. Politically, then, youthfulness is always a threat to authority and its order. Young Turks do not challenge the powers-that-be only because they have dissident views but also because they are youthful Turks. And often they are helped by allies hiding behind the mask of age.

Domesticating youthfulness requires the integration of the young into everyday life, but in recent decades higher education has postponed integration. Middle-class students cluster for years on university campuses which sometimes resemble youth ghettos. Many find this life irksome because it offers too little scope for the energies of youthfulness. The itch for action characteristic of SDS was one force leading to its formation. Its leftward orientation was, in part, the result of family background; a disproportionate number of early SDS members had parents with old left experience.

In 1960 there was a model of political action that was almost an ideal embodiment of the spirit of youthfulness. "SNCC moved us," Gitlin recalls, "seized our imaginations. From 1960 on, SDS felt wired to these staggeringly brave, overalled work-shirted college students . . . SNCC had suffered, SNCC was *there,* bodies on the line, moral authority incarnate."

SNCC also proved the importance of *student* activists. Aside from a minuscule number of young people organizationally connected with the remnants of the old left—e.g., the Young Peoples Socialist League (YPSL), whose membership in 1960 Isserman puts at 300—politically interested youth had no identification to fall back on other than "student." In 1960 to be a YPSL was to have a *political* identity, but to be a member of, say, Tocsin at Harvard only meant you were interested in political issues. Tending to dominate identity, the student status made it easier to succumb to the notion that students could be a decisive political force. SNCC confirmed this heady illusion.

It was also reinforced by the authoritative voice of the sociologist C. Wright Mills, who was seen, Miller says, as "a rebel and iconoclast in a world of button-down pedants" (a youthful ally among the elders). In a 1960 paper Mills celebrated "the young intelligentsia," and that article, Tom Hayden later told Miller, "helped us make sense of what we were doing . . . it made us feel as if we had been *anointed.*"

Mills's influence is apparent in the notion of "participatory democracy." As against mass society Mills stressed the importance of "publics," people in face-to-face interaction freely exchanging opinions and reaching decisions. Participatory democracy rests on the premise that without such interaction there is no real democracy. Another influence was Arnold Kaufman, one of Hayden's teachers at the University of Michigan and the coiner of the phrase. For Kaufman politics was not simply a way to achieve goals; it was also a way to find, as the SDS Port Huron statement said, "a meaning in life that is personally authentic."

Participatory democracy was a notably ambiguous concept. That is only to be expected, Miller maintains, since it contains "two distinct political visions." One "is of a face-to-face community of friends sharing interests in common; the second is of an experimental collective, embarked on a high risk effort to test the limits of democracy in modern life." The first is an instrumental orientation, and it became the animating principle for SDS groups that went into urban slums to organize the poor. There they lived, worked, and made decisions through consensus. The other vision represents an expressive component. "The guiding values of democratic experimentalism," Miller explains, "are spontaneity, imagination, passion, playfulness, *movement*—the sensation of being on edge, at the limits of freedom." Gitlin, too, sees in the idea of participatory democracy "an expressive tendency . . . in revolt against all formal boundaries and qualifications. . . . It trusted feeling and wanted 'to let it all hang out'. . . . Its faith was that a politics of universal expression would make the right things happen. . . ." All of which owes much to the spirit of youthfulness.

That spirit played a role in the break with the League for Industrial Democracy, SDS's formal parent. Michael Harrington and others in the LID thought the Port Huron statement showed an

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insufficient sense of the dangers of Soviet communism as well as an antagonism toward organized labor. Hayden defended it vehemently, and Richard Flacks, another SDS leader, later told Miller that Hayden "felt that he'd put too *much* anti-Communism into [it] already. The only reason he'd put in any anti-Communism was to placate these people who were bigots and were living in the Cold War past." This conflict was clearly generational, with perceptions of the Hungarian Revolution emblematic of the gulf between generations. For Harrington, as Gitlin sees it, it was "the living, burning epitome of his politics," while for the radical members of SDS " 'Hungary' was ancient history, something out of their early teens; it signified not so much a crushed revolution as a tattered banner in the Cold War. . . ."

Many others besides Harrington believed that Hungary was not at all "ancient history"; for them it was a significant marker in their lives. But for many in SDS, the significant marker was Fidel Castro; the Cuban revolution was imaginatively appropriated and made part of *their* identities.

Nor did the spirit of youthfulness always help matters. In an interview with Isserman, Gitlin remembers that when he first read a draft of the Port Huron statement he was "absolutely enraptured by it, thinking, 'My God, this what I feel.' I wouldn't even say 'think' because my thoughts were too inchoate." Since the statement was constructed to have exactly that emotional impact, his response was not unusual. But for those whose own youthfulness had been tempered by the experience of the radical politics of the old left, the Port Huron statement could only be a source of impatience.

Logically it might seem that the writers around *Dissent* would be one old left group SDS could have felt close to. Isserman, who devotes a chapter to *Dissent,* points to its continual warnings on the dangers of sectarianism and its emphasis on a conception of politics that was least partly congruent with the SDS vision. In 1956 Lewis Coser wrote that "one of the most significant contributions of a radical movement . . . will be to allow at least some men to fight their way to personal autonomy. . . ." Yet what many remember is bitter conflict between the two groups. In retrospect, the conflict seems almost inevitable.

The flight from sectarianism among the *Dissent* people meant a greater receptivity to ideas of political coalition and the compromising of differences in behalf of common ends. An emphasis on the value of personal autonomy meant, again in Coser's words, "that the struggle for civil and intellectual liberties is as important as the struggle for industrial democracy." But Coser also stressed that a desirable political life does not sacrifice "the here-and-now . . . as a necessary preparation for the revolutionary days to come." A premise like that requires a strong interest in maintaining and extending the welfare state. *Dissent,* without abandoning its basic commitment to socialism, began to move at increasing speed toward a kind of liberalism.

To the New Left, however, liberalism was, in the cliché of the era, "part of the problem." Gitlin discerns "a collision of political cultures" in the contrast of liberal and New Left perspectives. "Beneath the language of justice, in SDS's eyes, the liberal manager is a custodian of order. . . . The New Left style . . . valued informality, tolerated chaos, scorned order." A radical politics demanded a rejection of liberal politics. Miller cites an influential 1962 editorial in *Studies on the Left* which argued that not the conservative right but the liberals stood in the way of social change.

The New Left leaders, as Hayden told Miller, "thought our vision lay in the traditions of the left, but they had to be constructed all over again, in our time and our place." There were differences in style as well: "SDS was a group like the Jesuits or the Bolsheviks. It was a band of true believers taking action to catalyze and convert."

When *Dissent* editors met with Hayden and other SDS leaders including Gitlin—who comments on the meeting—it was a microcosm of generational conflict. "Above all, Hayden was inspired by, and loyal to, the handfuls of students who had succeeded in making history, whether through sitting-in at southern lunch counters or storming the Moncada barracks in Cuba." When the meeting ended, the Austrian Socialist Joseph Buttinger gave Hayden and Gitlin copies of his book, *The Twilight of Socialism.* They respected Buttinger for his heroic past, but "through no fault of his own, history condemned him to be a loser. Not for us the elegies of the twilight; for us the celebration of sunrises!"

As one looks back at the student movement, it is precisely the spirit of generosity that is most impressive. Unselfishness marked much of its thought and action. Blacks sitting-in at lunch counters were turning away from the traditional black bourgeoisie, and middle class white students who went south to work in the civil rights movement were, for a while, transcending barriers that separated them from the poor. The sheer guts of those activists still commands admiration.

Such students were morally serious and possessed of a genuine desire to grapple with the evils of rac-

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ism, poverty, and powerlessness. Their activism helped reawaken interest among many of the old left who had retreated from politics. The qualities of generosity, moral seriousness, and courage did not disappear even when the student movement became more problematic. I am thinking here of the antiwar movement and some aspects of the commune movement in its search for ways of realizing utopian goals. But the antiwar movement signaled a turning point.

The March on Washington, the teach-ins, and the Berkeley Free Speech Movement brought thousands of new members into SDS. Yet, Isserman points out, just at this critical time of rapid growth, the SDS leadership, full of "heedless self-confidence," left to organize the urban poor. Inspired by their own ideology and the example of SNCC, they went to work with "real people" and turned over their posts to new, untried leaders. Their fierce commitment and their itch for action now showed an absurd side. Miller describes how the new leadership, attempting "an experiment in office democracy," plunged the SDS national office into "mounting chaos. . . . Elitism was routed but virtually no mail was processed."

Numbers alone did not change SDS; the new recruits were qualitatively different. Gitlin uses their own self-description, "prairie power," to distinguish them from older SDS generations. They were younger; there were fewer Jews; more were from working class families; "and they were less intellectual, less articulate. . . ." They came from the small towns of the midwest and southwest where their support for civil rights earned them the label of "Communist" and estranged them from parents who had voted for Barry Goldwater. The rupture of relations with family and community joined to the youthful suspicion of authority meant that "they encountered no obstacles to moving further leftward." Nor did it check the expressive tendencies encouraged by SDS ideology. Many became highly vulnerable to countercultural freakishness, with youthful energy dribbling away into the pseudopolitics of the Yippies. The SDS old guard living among the urban poor and preoccupied with "the we-happy-few mystique of the early years of face-to-face organizing," writes Gitlin, "failed to take these 'prairie people' into our own old-boy networks. . . . Whereupon a generational chasm opened up within the student movement, reproducing the one that was opening up in the wider society." He neglects to mention that the SDS old guard was in almost the same position with respect to the new recruits as the old left had been vis-a-vis the New Left.

Some of the consequences of rigid ideology and untempered youthfulness became apparent in the antiwar movement. The New Left had always been sympathetic to Castro and Third World revolutionaries, and these sympathies made it easier for students to assume, as Gitlin puts it, that "the Vietnamese were a more victimized and better organized version of ourselves"; support for them was part of the struggle here in America. Hayden's well-publicized trip to Hanoi helped reinforce this vision. Nor was the antiwar movement helped when television viewers saw demonstrators waving Vietcong flags.

Running through New Left ideology was a profound distrust of leadership. The admired model was what Miller calls "the self-abnegating (anti-) leadership style" of SNCC. Problems like how to make leaders accountable were not pertinent for those who believed that face-to-face groups living by consensus represented the core meaning of democracy. Yet at the same time those who elaborated this version of democracy defined student intellectuals as an "anointed" elite with a "mission." The ultimate consequences of these visions became visible in the final stages of SDS's life. In its last days, according to Gitlin, "all factions of the SDS strutted about as self-appointed vanguards in search of battalions," and discovered the key to successful organizing in . . . Leninism! History as farce, but only if we forget the Weathermen.

The decade ended violently: police riots, ghetto riots, murders of civil rights workers, assassinations. To see the Weathermen as simply a product of radical politics gone completely off the rails is to ignore a broader social and cultural context from which they emerged. For the Weathermen were one possible end-product of New Left ideas, and in Gitlin's unsentimental description we can see them in the narrower context of New Left ideology and the spirit of youthfulness:

> They were pure New Left in a way—self-enclosed, contemptuous of liberalism, romantic about Third World revolutions, organized in small squads, exuberant with will, courageous, reckless, arrogant, burning to act *as if* anything might be possible.

The Weathermen, however, were only one possible outcome.

The student movement was a youth movement, and inevitably youthfulness is tempered by experience and the challenge of succeeding generations. This is evident in these three intelligent books. If these writers can be taken as representative figures, then perhaps the student movement will have long-lasting effects. American politics, both liberal and democratic socialist, may yet be enriched by a youthfulness that will have assimilated what was most positive in the thought and most generous in the spirit of the student movement. □

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Maurice Isserman

SPIN CONTROL

REUNION: A MEMOIR, by Tom Hayden. New York: Random House, 1988. 539 pp. $22.50.

> "Buddy once said something reasonably sensible to me a couple of years ago," he said. "If I can remember what it was." He hesitated. And Franny, though still busy with her Kleenex, looked over at him. When Zooey appeared to have difficulty in remembering something, his hesitation invariably interested all his brothers and sisters, and even held some entertainment value for them. — *Franny and Zooey*.

Much of the entertainment value of J. D. Salinger's Glass family stories consists in watching intellectually and emotionally complicated characters work their way through to simple (or, if you're not a Salinger fan, banal) truths. Much the same could be said of Tom Hayden's new book, *Reunion: A Memoir*. As with Zooey, Hayden's mannerisms—written, spoken, and performed—have always been part of his message, often the most important part. Of course, Hayden's lower middle class Catholic upbringing in Royal Oak, Michigan could not have been further removed from the Upper West Side world of the Glass stories. But there were moments in the 1960s when Hayden came across as if he were the unmentioned youngest sibling of Seymour, Buddy and the rest. He turned in a representative performance at a 1964 SDS national meeting, as described in Jim Miller's *Democracy is in the Streets:*

> Hayden controlled the flow of discussion with non sequiturs presented as if they were Zen koans. For example: "What if we were to stay here for six years and not come to a decision?"

For Franny and Zooey a style of mystical simplicity was its own reward, a means in an apolitical decade of setting oneself apart from and at the same time adjusting to a world full of "phonies." Hayden, a decade younger than Salinger's characters, had a larger agenda when he engaged in what Miller describes as "histrionic displays of Socratic ignorance and moral humility." If much has changed in Hayden's life since the 1960s, *Reunion* makes it clear that some things have not. He is still a complicated man, still engaged in the strenuous endeavor of appearing simple.

The amount of shrewd calculation that went into the creation of *Reunion* is evident from the first, starting with the cover photo of Hayden offering up his famous lop-sided boyish grin. Hayden introduces himself to his readers in *Reunion*'s preface as man-child in the promised playing fields:

> The sun is shining over Santa Monica, and I am playing my usual position, right field, and batting seventh for the Hollywood Stars. . . . It is the fifth year since I started playing hardball again; the desire surged back when my son, Troy, who is now fourteen, entered the Little League. Tomorrow I will coach his team in Culver City, yelling to him, as my father did to me, "That's okay, son. That's the way. You can do it, son. You can do it. That's the way."

The line between Hayden's identities as son and father is kept deliberately indistinct in this passage, and it foretells the major theme of the book, the arrival at maturity through a return to boyhood innocence. On his "long odyssey" from the sixties through the eighties Hayden

> tried to make the world fit my idealistic American values and met discord, then rejection, from my parents as well as the state. I reacted in ways which compromised my best judgment, and I experienced what Albert Camus called "the temptation of hatred." In the end I was fortunate to reach a point of return, of personal and political reintegration. My life, and my original values, resurfaced intact from the depths of alienation.

The pose of holy innocence and the employment of the prophetic voice tell us something about the conventions of American autobiographical literature—and even more, I suspect, about Hayden's career ambitions. His "simple hope," he tells us, is that *Reunion* "will stir a therapeutic chord in all those who lived through, or are still affected by, the unique trauma of the sixties." Right. That, and help clear the way for his return to the national political arena (Hayden's plan, according to some California insiders, is to succeed incumbent Mel Levine as Congressman from California's 27th Congressional District, assuming Alan Cranston retires and Levine makes a run for the US Senate in 1992).

There is something about Tom Hayden that doesn't inspire trust. At a recent gathering to mark the 20th anniversary of the Columbia strike a documentary film about the strike was shown; Hayden's image was booed by former SDSers in the audience every time it appeared on the screen. And if that's the current state of regard in which Hayden's held among those who might be expected to have the greatest respect for him, what does it say about his prospects for winning acceptance from a broader public? How fast can he shed the requisite amount of political baggage necessary to make it in

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the big time without exacerbating already existing suspicions about his character? *Reunion,* so transparently designed as an exercise in autobiographical spin-control, is going to do little to persuade the skeptics.

Taken simply as narrative chronology, *Reunion* does succeed in reminding us that Hayden helped shape some of the most significant moments in recent American history. He played an essential role in the rebirth of campus activism in the early 1960s, as a founder of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and author of its 1962 manifesto, the Port Huron Statement. He provided valuable support to the southern student civil rights movement in its formative years, on occasion at the risk of his personal safety. In the mid-sixties he helped launch a community organizing program that would both influence and stand as a reproach to the limitations of the federal War on Poverty. For four years he lived and worked in the Newark slums until the long hot summer of 1967 foreclosed any meaningful role for white organizers in a black ghetto. While still living in Newark he began to turn his attention to antiwar organizing, traveling to Hanoi on several occasions, publicizing the effects of the U.S. bombing and helping secure the release of some American POWs. In 1968 he took on the project for which he is most famous (or notorious), organizing the protests at the Democratic convention, which led to his indictment and trial in the Chicago Eight conspiracy case. In the early 1970s he helped bring antiwar protest back into the political mainstream through his Indochina Peace Campaign; and in the later 1970s he led a portion of the New Left back into the Democratic party through his Campaign for Economic Democracy. In the 1980s he carved out a respectable niche for himself in California politics as a hardworking and progressive state assemblyman.

Hayden was present at the creation of the New Left, and swiftly emerged as first among equals in its leadership. But it was a strange movement to lead. The least affected and most powerful chapter of *Reunion* describes Hayden's involvement with the civil rights movement in 1960–1962. The young black southern activists he met at a National Student Association convention in 1960 impressed him not just because their cause was right, but because of the kind of people they had become through their involvement in the movement:

> They lived on a fuller level of feeling than any people I'd ever seen, partly because they were making modern history in a very personal way, and partly because by risking death they came to know the value of living each moment to the fullest. . . . Here were the models of charismatic commitment I was seeking—I wanted to live like them.

The activist core of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was tested in those early days through acts of courage and decision-making made (figuratively and sometimes literally) under fire, and the process produced some extraordinary leaders. People were accorded respect as leaders to the extent that they embodied the values the movement stood for. It was a style of leadership that was difficult to sustain over the long haul. In both SNCC and SDS organizational problems were complicated by a popular anti-leader bias that led, in Hayden's words, "to a resentment of anyone with significant authority and a dire fear of formalizing it, even if that authority was based on achievement or could be useful for communicating through the media." Hayden was personally victimized by this bias on several occasions, most traumatically in 1970 when he was expelled from the "Red Family" collective in Berkeley after a bruising criticism/self-criticism session. What he fails to acknowledge is the extent to which, in an earlier phase of the movement, he benefited from and indeed perfected the manipulative possibilities of an "anti-leader" leadership style. Again, drawing on Jim Miller's account, there was one famous SDS meeting in the mid-1960s where "Hayden refused to sit on stage and debate in front of an audience, instead taking a seat among the rank and file. 'You're such a grass root, Tom,' snapped his opponent, 'that I don't know whether to debate you or water you.' "

Hayden is striving to produce a balanced treatment of the New Left in *Reunion,* which is all to the good, but does so in a way that allows him to take credit for its virtues while exculpating himself from responsibility for its worst excesses. He notes, correctly, that as SDS tottered towards the apocalypse in its last few years, he had lost much of the influence within the organization that he had earlier enjoyed. Leadership went to those newer recruits who were most adept at simulating the requirements of "charismatic commitment" through the medium of militant rhetorical posturing. Hayden was disconcerted by the "new type of campus leader" he now encountered, as exemplified by Mark Rudd at Columbia:

> At age twenty, he was only nine years younger than I was, but already there was a world of difference. . . . He was absolutely committed to an impossible yet galvanizing dream; that of transforming the entire student movement, through this particular student revolt, into a successful effort to bring down the system. . . . [He] was committed to revolutionary destruction, sarcastic and smugly dogmatic. I sensed in Mark an embryo of

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> fanaticism that made me feel slightly irrelevant in his presence.

Perhaps Rudd and the events at Columbia did inspire misgivings in Hayden, but if so they were not evident in any of his public statements at the time. Instead, through yet another expenditure of ersatz humility, Hayden scrambled to get back in the vanguard of the movement whose control had slipped his grasp. "The issues being considered by seventeen-year-old freshmen at Columbia University would not have been within the imagination of most 'veteran' student activists five years ago," Hayden wrote with apparent enthusiasm in *Ramparts* in the summer of 1968. "Students at Columbia discovered that barricades are only the beginning of what they call 'bringing the war home.' "

I don't think Hayden was booed at the Columbia SDS reunion because he "sold out" or "went Hollywood." No one there expected him to keep playing the rumpled student visionary forever; the audience had careers, families, mortgages of their own to contend with, factors which tend to encourage in all but the most ideologically hidebound a measure of tolerance for the accommodations that others have made along the way. Hayden hasn't become an apostate, like David Horowitz, or a clown, like Jerry Rubin; there hasn't been any single act or statement he's made that in itself has been regarded by his former comrades as unforgivable. There is just something about the ease with which—in the sixties and since—Hayden has been able to move from one political stance, strategy and identity to another, without regard to continuity, logic, or the feelings and beliefs of those he has successively left behind, that has made him an easy man to dislike.

In the concluding chapters of the book Hayden pulls out all the stops. Here all the ingratiating images of the book, Hayden-as-child, Hayden-as-seer, Hayden-as-healer come together in a final all-out drive for acceptance from the reader/voter. He describes a belated reconciliation with his father, a conservative Marine veteran who had broken all contact with his son in the mid-1960s:

> One morning, when we were standing alone on a sidewalk, my father said, out of nowhere, "Son, I'm proud of you." Those simple words, so hard to say, were all I needed to hear. "Thanks, Dad. I love you. I'm sorry it's been so long."

This one unstaged reconciliation spurred Hayden on to a frenzy of calculated fence-mending, a triumph of contrivance over substance. Sometime in 1986 or 1987 (the chronology gets a little vague here) Hayden set out on a trek around the country. He went to his thirtieth high school reunion in Royal Oak, where he found a spirit of "real caring, real values, each for the other"; he visited the site of SDS's Port Huron convention, found it much changed since 1962, and was sadly reflective on the passing of time; he visited his former wife in Atlanta, to whom he talked "gently about our breakup"; he drove down to McComb, Mississippi, which he last saw as a civil rights worker in 1961; there he tried unsuccessfully to contact the white thug who beat him up on his first visit and left a message, "Tell him Tom Hayden was passing through McComb and wanted to see him about the old days."

I detect a campaign theme in the making. In one of the few comments he offers on contemporary politics Hayden complains that since Ronald Reagan's election "the official mood of the nation has been contrary to a spirit of reconciliation." Reagan's constant harping on the "Vietnam syndrome," his criticism of "naysayers" reminds Hayden "of the most rigid view of my parents' generation when they wanted to impose the lessons of their experience on their children and grandchildren." In the 1960s the New Left had a slogan that "the personal is political." For Hayden in the 1980s the political has become the personal. Good sons deserve to be rewarded by their fathers. Hayden seems disappointed that President Reagan won't just call him up and say, "That's okay, son. That's the way." If the world (or at least the 27th C.D.) could only forgive and love Tom Hayden the way his family and friends have come to forgive and love him, America's troubles would be over. "Partisan labels and stereotypes didn't seem to matter," he writes of his high school reunion, "as much as caring about the quality of each other's lives. For me it felt like a return, not of everyone's favorite son, but not a prodigal one either, just a native son." (You still looking, Franny?) □

COMING IN *DISSENT*

Michael Harrington on Socialism and the Market
Paul Berman on *The Last Intellectuals*
Cynthia Fuchs Epstein on Labor and Technology
Eric Foner on Colonial Slavery

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Jim Chapin

WHAT IF THEY GAVE AN ELECTION AND EVERYONE CAME?

WHY AMERICANS DON'T VOTE, by Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988. 325 pp. $19.95.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, like many other intellectuals from the 1960s, have moved from anti-electoral positions to an intense interest in the American electoral process. In *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (1977), they argued that protest should "break out" of the confines of electoral procedures. Now they have a more nuanced position: electoral action both undermines *and* supports collective protest. In their latest book, *Why Americans Don't Vote,* they confront one of the crucial problems of our electoral system: the underrepresentation of the lower classes in the American electorate. The authors introduce their work straightforwardly: "This book is about the institutional arrangements that produce massive non-voting by lower- and working-class people in the United States."

> American registration procedures are Byzantine compared with those that prevail in other democracies. The major difference is that governments elsewhere assume an affirmative obligation to register citizens. People are certified as eligible to vote automatically when they come of age and obtain identity cards, or government-sponsored canvassers go door to door before each election to enlist voters. The United States is the only major democracy where government treats voting as if it were a privilege that each citizen must earn by overcoming voter registration obstacles.

Piven and Cloward note that registration obstacles are not the sole cause for low turnout. The American system is affected by "shifts in the pattern of party competition, in the organization of the parties, and in the rules governing access to the ballot." They see a connection between barriers to registration and changes in the behavior of parties. After lower class voters were marginalized, the political parties adapted to new realities, and now function in a "conservative" manner to keep the electorate small: after all, incumbents have benefited from the size of the present electorate.

The authors do not join in the recent celebrations of the high turnout levels in nineteenth-century-America. They suggest that turnout in the nineteenth century has been overestimated and call the politics of the era "tribalist" and "clientelist." The "tribes" included ethnic groups, sectional groups, and racial groups, gathering themselves under the banners of parties that provided jobs for the faithful. Such a politics was intensely localist, reflecting the decentralization of the national political system and the national economy. And in practice the elites were insulated despite democratic participation.

In their view, late-nineteenth-century industrialization led to class-based movements struggling for control of an increasingly interventionist state. This was intolerable to the older elites. The extreme case was in the old Confederacy, where disenfranchisement of blacks was at first carried out through fraud and force, but was institutionalized at the turn of the century through poll taxes, literacy tests, and so on. Turnout in presidential elections in the South fell from 57 percent in 1896 to 43 percent in 1900 to 29 percent in 1904. A similar but slower process went on in the North, a result of the "system of 1896."

One election, whatever its results, could not have had such profound effects by itself. The old parties were subjected to a variety of anti-party attacks: civil service, nonpartisan governments, printed ballots, direct primaries, and election regulations. Turnout was limited by a variety of means: residency restrictions, restrictions on immigrant voting, literacy tests, and, most important, voter registration. The requirements of registration, particularly in large cities, became ever more strict: personal registration, annual registration, early registration, and even door to door canvasses to eliminate (but not to find) voters.

Piven and Cloward stress that quarrels over registration procedures started as party conflicts, with the dominant party trying to disenfranchise its opponents. "The impact of voter registration laws and procedures cannot be assessed without taking into account the motives and capacities of the political parties involved in implementing them." Eventually, however, "the parties themselves became the defenders of the voter registration procedures that ensured their stability and protected incumbents." As a result of the combined effects of changes in parties and the new rules, the electorate decreased over time.

The decline of party competition was matched by the rise of internal oligarchies in the dominant parties. The full weight of these changes was delayed through the Progressive Era, they argue, linking many Progressive trends to the later New Deal. But during and after World War I the repression of the American left and a swing to the right completed the development of the "system of 1896." By the middle 1920s it appeared to be

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unchallenged, and turnout reached its lowest levels in American history.

The authors are rightfully skeptical of psychological or social explanations for low turnout by the poor, noting that these explanations simply assume the existence of what is supposedly being investigated. Such analyses are simply another case of "blaming the victims."

During the New Deal, non-southern turnout began to rise, as the Democratic party became the partial expression of the interests of northern workers. Ironically, however, Piven and Cloward point out that the biggest jump in northern turnout came not during the New Deal but in 1928, a jump which clearly was the result of "Protestant" and "Catholic" "tribes" opposing each other. By comparison, turnout did not increase in 1932, increased only four percent in 1936, and a further one percent in 1940. They point out that the Roosevelt majority depended on a "solid South" controlled by a white oligarchy, and that this conservative South imposed limits on the Democratic party's ability to appeal to the northern working class.

The study then turns to the changes of the fifties and sixties. As Democrats became more dependent on northern black voters, their policies became more sensitive to their concerns, and they lost the votes of southern whites. By 1964, the first southern president since the Civil War captured 90 percent of the Negro vote while losing the Deep South by large margins. After 1964, Democrats had to back black voting in the South for the same reason as Republicans had until their "permanent majority" in 1896. Meanwhile, the northern Republicans supported voting rights legislation because they saw an opportunity to divide the Democrats. If rising black voting helped the Democrats, rising white backlash helped the Republicans.

Since the national Democrats wanted to increase minority turnout and the local Democratic white machines didn't, the new programs bypassed the "untrustworthy" locals. The politics of allocation were universalized in the service sector and in public agencies. In the 1970s the Democratic majority fell apart. The authors refer to the problems of racial turmoil and the controversies aroused by "New Politics" advocates, but take more seriously the economic mobilization of corporations and the demobilization of workers. As the composition of the working class changed, unions failed to accommodate to it. Although President Jimmy Carter introduced an election day registration bill in 1977 it failed in the face of business/Republican hostility and only lukewarm support from the Democrats.

The authors recount their own experiences in the registration campaigns leading up to the 1984 elections. As they put it, the Republican party galvanized itself to counter a registration effort that the Democratic party never really attempted. They conclude that the major result of the registration campaigns was that private resources cancelled each other out.

However, in their concluding chapter they express optimism. They feel that "reform at the state and local level is itself a precondition to eventually winning reform at the national level." They go on to argue that "the conditions favoring reform are the entry of new groups into the electorate against a background of defections among existing constituencies." The advantages of the fragmented state structure are that expanding electorates in some states make it possible for representatives from those states to support expansion in all states (rather on the model of northern black voting in the New Deal leading to southern black enfranchisement in the 1960s).

This is a clear thesis laid out clearly. But is it right? Their thesis really doesn't explain the decline in turnouts in the seventies. Although they point out that as recently as 1970, 14 states outside the South conducted literacy tests, all those tests have now been abolished. And if voting is linked to such factors as income, education, laws, and so on, turnout should have been rising as economic and educational indices have been rising and as the laws for voting have become less restrictive. The authors correctly point out that informal income or education tests (caused by factors such as registration locations and hours) remain, but they don't even suggest that these restrictions have become *worse* in the last two decades.

Even their success stories show something of the problem. A nine percent jump in Michigan registration in 1984 didn't help Walter Mondale, who got a lower percentage of the white working class vote there than George McGovern did in 1972. If nonvoters in 1980 leaned towards Jimmy Carter, it should be mentioned that at least some of them didn't vote *because* of their attitudes toward Carter!

In my own neighborhood of western Queens, the turnout per assembly district fell some 5,000 votes per district after 1973. The voters that stayed home, as far as can be determined, were "backlash" conservative ethnics who voted against John Lindsay and for Richard Nixon. The last great turnout in this area was in the mayoral run-off primary of 1973, when thousands of white ethnics flooded the polls in

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order to elect Abraham Beame over Herman Badillo. The five assembly districts largely contained within the Ninth Congressional district were held by four Republicans in 1972: by 1982 all were Democratic. Piven and Cloward don't deal with the question of how to attract and hold these voters. They seem to believe that an increase in voting would favor the present left agenda, and that point, at least, is arguable. In fact, it is probable that the policies that these prospective new voters would favor would not be those that would satisfy Piven and Cloward, or, for that matter, most of the readers of *Dissent*. In ethnic Queens, at least, the "missing voters" are not those that would bring comfort to Piven, Cloward, or Jesse Jackson.

Recent turnout patterns at the national level show that this pattern is not unique: northern turnout peaked in 1960 and southern turnout in 1968. But both of these were "tribal" as much as the elections of the nineteenth century or of 1928: Protestant versus Catholic in 1960 and white (George Wallace) versus black (Hubert Humphrey) in the South in 1968. It has been suggested that after 1968 the two parties fell under the control of competing New Class ideological elites tied to different parts of the government payroll. If the core electorate of the Republican party is the military-industrial complex, then the core of the Democratic party is the academic-social services complex. The military-industrial complex acts as an upward redistribution mechanism, but so, to a lesser degree, does the City University of New York, taxing $25,000 a year workers in order to fund $90,000 a year administrators and $60,000 a year professors. Nonvoting on the part of workers in the private sector may not be an entirely irrational response to this situation!

The greatest level of mobilization in the modern American electorate comes in racially polarized municipal elections like those in Chicago and Philadelphia. If there had been same-day voting registration in Chicago, Harold Washington probably would not have been elected. The core electorate is now more liberal than the peripheral electorate, and may be more liberal than the potential electorate. It cannot be assumed that an increased turnout would benefit the existing left: that left would have to change and be changed by their presence.

There is a more philosophical point. The implicit model for the American left has been the socialist parties of Europe, but at present European politics seems more likely to become "American" than American politics is likely to become "European." Socialist voting in Europe was as "tribal" as the American voter behavior of which Piven and Cloward write. It could at least be argued that the substitution of a general culture for the separate culture of the workers has been a *victory* for the modern secular state.

While electoral rules are important, the question of how voters are mobilized is even more important. As one who has spent his life in electoral politics, I find myself ironically less optimistic about the possibilities to be found there than the new "converts" who wrote this book. They are fighting for a good cause, but electoral politics should be the end of a movement, not its beginning. □

George Ross

Constraints and Limitations

Is Socialism Doomed? by Daniel Singer. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. 324 pp. $24.95.

Is Socialism Doomed? is an elegant analysis of the experience of the French left in power after 1981. The general reader will learn much about France and its left from the book. Singer combines two rare qualities—a compelling writing style and a resolutely leftist viewpoint. *Is Socialism Doomed?* is a pleasure to read—and it's also powerfully controversial. In 300 pages Daniel Singer can find very little good to say about the years of Mitterrand in power in France.

Singer starts with the context needed to understand what the left did after François Mitterrand's election to the presidency in May 1981. Leaving the sleepy stodginess of empire behind in the 1950s, France rapidly became a full-fledged modern capitalist society, only to face new years of "crisis" after the postwar boom collapsed in the mid-1970s. In this complex transition virtually everything, including the French constitution, changed. France's schismatic left changed as well, but not enough and not always in the proper ways. It came to power, Singer claims, "bewitched and bewildered." The Communist party, very powerful until the early 1980s, remained transfixed by the failed Soviet model. The CP's fetishes allowed the Socialists to rebuild from their own very checkered past, but the Socialist party's need to cooperate with the CP and the elitist, technocratic cast of its new leaders were severe handicaps. The Socialists' new leader, François Mitterrand, was an agile centrist who, after perceiving the left as an arena of personal opportunity, "learned to speak Socialist."

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Thus the mixed gaggle of left politicians who came to power in 1981 faced "constraints and limitations from the very start." The left's 1981 success, Singer claims, was "an ideological defeat and a political victory." Mitterrand's refusal to devalue the franc immediately was a sign, Singer claims, of his desire to demonstrate a safe orthodoxy, a willingness to "play the game." Still, Mitterrand's early governments, which included four Communist ministers (irrelevant, Singer claims), first stimulated demand in the French economy in a redistributive way and beefed up the welfare state, then promoted changes in industrial relations (where France was desperately backward) and, most significantly, enacted the most extensive nationalizations seen in Europe since 1947.

Although Singer does not completely discount the left's early burst of radicalism, he stresses that it came from above from technocratic elites in statist ways. *Autogestion*—self-management—the Socialist 1970s buzzword, was abruptly forgotten. The turn to failure came in 1982–83, at the confluence of the international Reagan recession and the consequences of the left's macroeconomic imprudence, in response to a severe international trade crisis. The left then had a choice, says Singer, between a semi-autarkic effort to fulfill its radical pledges and retreating in conformity with the dictates of the international market. It chose the latter.

Because it had failed to think through its own radical proposals, because its statism deprived it of reserves of popular mobilization, and because the core of left politicians really did not want to transcend capitalism, the Mitterrand government retreated to austerity politics, cutting wages and increasing taxes. Thereafter the left was unable either to reward its constituencies with improved living standards or to give them any sense of participation in national transformation. Politically weakened, it then tried to "cover" its austerity programs with inept political attacks on private education and press monopoly, moves which had perverse effects, however. The right was thereby permitted to occupy, if only momentarily, the high ground of civil libertarianism and to take to the streets in protest. The right's electoral strength grew and its flirtation with Thatcherite neoliberalism was intensified.

At story's end the Socialists—the Communists bailed out in 1984 to return to Brezhnevite confusion—lived a "cultural revolution," amidst much breastbeating about their earlier radical "illusions." They thus replaced earlier redistributive goals with new ones focusing on the "modernization" of French industry to make it more competitive internationally. Singer treats the foreign policy history of the left under Mitterrand as a coda, which moves in rhythms similar to domestic policy.

Singer insists that movement towards socialism must involve visible effort, today, to transcend capitalism. There are no middle ways. The task is not easy, Singer knows, not least because the term socialism itself no longer has a clear meaning and can only be redefined through innovative practice. Alas, here Singer offers only the vaguest suggestions. The left must cease being centralizing and statist and learn to promote grass-roots democracy. It must rethink its notion of "workers" to include new sectors and kinds of work, discarding old-fashioned reifications of the factory-based proletariat. It must incorporate energies from new social movements like feminism and the greens. It must invent new democratic techniques of mobilization. And, above all, it must realize that its reach must be international.

Measured against these criteria, socialism may well be doomed in France. The French left was statist and centralizing, hadn't a clue about mobilizing people, let alone in new democratic ways, and had little desire to do so in any event, misunderstood France's economy and the international market around it, and so on. Mitterrand and the French left did not move towards socialism at all, but instead "did the capitalists' work for them." Worse still, Singer concludes, in word and deed they discredited the notion of socialism itself.

Some readers will be exasperated by Singer's ultra-left viewpoint. They will claim that the French left in 1981 was hopelessly out of touch with the problems and prospects of France. To them, a recognition of the reality of France's irrevocable insertion in a constraining international economy was absolutely necessary. Mistakes which the left initially made, however "radical," made this belated recognition even more painful. Moreover, they might add, the moment when the left came to power, characterized by a strong capitalist counteroffensive against the left's gains in the postwar boom, was hardly propitious for moving towards socialism, whatever that might have meant. The best Mitterrand and the French left could do was to make the best of a bad situation and, in particular, to block the emergence of a serious, Thatcherite-Reaganite right in France. In this they were successful, our critics would assert, so much so that Mitterrand was reelected in 1988, the right lost its parliamentary majority and emerged from the 1988 elections in a state of internal division and policy uncertainty. In the meantime, they would conclude, the French welfare state was preserved, some reforms were

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consolidated and new grass-roots democratic energy emerged. To be sure, they would have to add, French capitalism was given some new hope, unemployment remained high and racism had become a greater threat. Still, they would conclude, the Mitterrand years were largely positive.

This reviewer does not take such Panglossian positions about the record of the French left. There is some truth in the claim that Mitterrand and the Socialists have indeed staved off a neoconservative assault in France—a good thing. But they did so, as Singer claims, at the cost of commitment to social transformation and, by and large, in the name of modernizing French capitalism. Still, it is not enough to excommunicate the French left for no longer being committed to socialist transformation, as Singer does. There remain a number of other essential questions to be addressed, and here Singer falls short. To begin with, Singer's claim that socialism is both a virtuous goal and a feasible process is marvelously exhortative. Yet what does it mean? Until we can speak more concretely about a real socialist project such noble assertions are mainly of use to bash people we don't like. To hold the Socialist banner high is a good thing. But in the absence of new ideas about how to carry the banner forward, there is something too easy about brandishing it to condemn others.

The simple "you're either for socialism or capitalism" dichotomy which Singer uses has another defect. What happened in France in recent years is extraordinary. One left, unusually radical, at least rhetorically, gave way to another, no longer radical at all. Simply labeling this new left "social democratic" and therefore hopeless, as Singer does, does not get us very far. There is a strong case to be made that we are witnessing in France—and perhaps in Spain and Italy as well—a *new* formulation of left politics whose most important characteristic is precisely that it is *not* social democratic at all. French socialism no longer talks about "class" and "class conflict" but about the need to liberate the energies of "civil society" and about "national unity." Moreover, if in the past French Socialism never gave more than lip service to organic ties to a strong labor movement—the central identifying feature of social democracy—it abandoned even this in the 1980s. Labor no longer holds an important place in French Socialists' vision. The old social-democratic idea of a party of militants trying to organize ordinary people into a "counter-society" embodying the politics of the future was dropped. The French PS has become a technocrat-run electoral machine whose main purpose is to win, and stay in, power. Television, hypermodern public relations techniques, and the commercialization of personalities have come to the fore. It is true, of course, that a French version of the American Democratic party is unlikely to move towards socialism. But it is also true that the dominance of this kind of politics on the French left is new, and of very great interest. Perhaps it should be denounced, as Singer does. But, more significantly, it should also be analyzed, which Singer does not. □

Joseph Clark

PAINFUL MEMORIES

CAUSE AT HEART: A FORMER COMMUNIST REMEMBERS, by Junius Irving Scales and Richard Nickson. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1987. 417 pp. $24.95.

This timely book deals with events that seem to be receding into a distant past. But it was as recently as the sixties that Junius Irving Scales, once a leader of the Communist party (CP), served in Lewisburg penitentiary for violating the membership clause of the Smith Act.

Though our country has never been a hospitable home for communist (or socialist) movements and these never had many adherents, there's something generic about communists, anywhere and everywhere. To understand world affairs, we have to understand communism, since it will be singularly important for a long time. Unlikely though it seems, it was President Reagan, father of the concept of the immutable evil empire, who inaugurated negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union to lift the miasma of a threatened nuclear armageddon from the world.

The life of Junius Scales, scion of southern slaveowning aristocracy and organizer of the Communist party in at least four states of the old Confederacy, is not an infallible guide to the understanding of the problems of communism in the nuclear age. But in a joint effort with an old friend, Richard Nickson, Scales has made a serious attempt to answer the rueful question asked by another southerner and former CP leader, Robert F. Hall: "I know why I joined the CP; I know why I quit the party; but I'll be damned if I know why I stayed in the party."

What makes the question so painful is that many intelligent, compassionate people stayed on despite all the twists and turns of communist policy. Lenin had said they were riding the locomotive of history,

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but the engine went from the heroism of fighting fascism in Spain to the disgrace of supporting the Hitler-Stalin alliance.

It is noteworthy that Scales quit the Communist party of the U.S.A. for the same reasons that thousands of Chinese youth broke with the Chinese CP in Peking just a few years ago. The Chinese students, just like Scales, were dismayed to discover that the Communist regimes were guilty of foul and murderous deeds. They also discovered how attractive and how truly revolutionary democracy was. In both instances—here and way over there—they began to define democracy as Lincoln did, rather than Stalin's or Mao's effigy.

Why did Scales join the CP when he was a student at the University of North Carolina? There are the expected reasons—ranging from revulsion against the segregation and oppression of blacks (Negroes, in the language of the time) to the discovery of the working class, many in number and terribly poor, especially in the textile mills of the South. The Communists turned up not only at factories and mills, but, through the American Student Union, at the university.

While growing up in a home with loving, educated parents, with entree to a world of good music, literature, art and ideas, Scales found "an aggressive philistinism" in the world around him. Perhaps a touch of cultural elitism was one of the reasons he joined the party. He describes "the feeling of being apart from others," and from that alienation came an impulse that brought him to the party. Visits by Clifford Odets and W.H. Auden to Chapel Hill helped to free him from the stifling world of the philistines; a vibrant cultural life was "waiting for lefty."

Scales reveals how ideology, when congealed into dogma, displaces logical thinking as well as contact with the real world. When, in the late summer of 1939, the radio reported that a pact had been signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Scales "snorted, that's about as likely as a snowstorm in hell." In minutes it was clear that such a pact had indeed been signed and "the Soviet radio was playing German songs and talking of the historic friendship between the two peoples." Bart Logan, party chief in North Carolina and a shrewd individual, explained that the Russians were making "a desperate bid for time in which to prepare to fight. He reasoned that whatever Stalin and the Soviet party had done had been considered necessary for saving the Soviet Union. There was nothing for good Communists to do but take it on faith and wait for details and explanations."

Positions, no matter how outrageous, were accepted on faith. But there still had to be endless lists of books, innumerable classes and study circles, even the supreme university—the Comintern school in Moscow. There were some very bright people among the communist folk who would scornfully deny that they ever accepted anything on faith and resented analogies made between orthodox religion and orthodox communist belief. The extraordinary thing about the Stalinist study system was that it was based on faith yet persuaded its students that they were pursuing a scientific discipline. Scales adds it up:

> We young scholars were all becoming hard-shelled ideologues, believing that our ideology incorporated all the wisdom and humanism of previous ages and convinced absolutely of the essential soundness of Marxism-Leninism. We were becoming impervious to every opposing view. Contrary ideas all seemed to have been drawn from poisoned wells; such stuff was simply propaganda from the enemy class aimed at disrupting and confusing the revolutionary working class.

The man who joined the party in revulsion against cultural philistinism found himself molded into his own antithesis. "As with any dedicated fanatic, there would be a narrowing of focus, a delimiting of the horizon. I would be on a slim ration of music, literature and art for a while to come." From the beginning, as with most party members who allowed their mental capacities and characters to be twisted by their "leaders," there were always doubts about the absurdities they accepted as gospel. But as William Morris once put it, they "burned up their doubts," and for sixteen more years Scales served the phantom revolution in which his party leaders and many of the McCarthyites believed devoutly.

Why did Scales quit the party? The year 1956—when he quit—tells the story. It was the year of the Khrushchev revelations about Stalin. That was the year when communism in all its aspects—the communist regimes, starting with the Soviet Union, the satellites of Eastern Europe, Mao's China, which broke decisively with the Soviets, the mass communist parties such as the Italian, and the small, isolated party of this country—entered a severe crisis. It's difficult for someone who has not experienced the spell of devotion to a fanatical movement to understand how much the events of 1956 shook up communists everywhere.

A personal note: at that time, as an editor of the *Daily Worker,* I was gleefully editing a feature no communist paper had ever had before. It was a letter department—but what letters! People who had devoted their entire lives to the party wrote about the

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crimes of Stalin and the betrayal of thousands, millions of communists who discovered that their supreme leader was a mass murderer. I remember that the *New Leader* suggested that the whole letter business was a put-up job. (I should add that they soon saw the folly of that comment.)

Invited to attend a meeting of the party's leaders, Scales heard William Z. Foster discuss the rebellion sweeping Hungary. Foster expressed satisfaction about the intervention of Soviet tanks and indicated that they would soon take care of "this CIA 'revolution.' " Scales burst out: "Those are working people the Red Army is shooting down! If I were in Budapest now, I'd be throwing Molotov cocktails at Soviet tanks!"

Till that moment Scales was a party hero because he had been singled out by the Department of Justice for prosecution under the membership clause of the Smith Act. After leaving the national office of the party, Scales informed his attorney, Telford Taylor, that he would be defending a *former* Communist.

One valuable contribution of this book is that it demonstrates that the major victims of McCarthyism and right-wing anticommunism were the American people and the social fabric woven by the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. The Justice Department outdid itself by making clear that it would prosecute and imprison Scales because although he'd left the CP he still refused to become an informer for the FBI. The FBI, of course, was busy transforming its mandate of fighting crime into fighting "dangerous thoughts." Happily, the Smith Act and the Internal Security Act have become defunct, "derelict legislation" as Taylor puts it in his splendid foreword to the book.

The book has its faults. Perhaps the most glaring is a failing of the genre of autobiography itself. Few care to reveal their own warts and weaknesses. Scales argues, as many present and former CP members do, that one reason they became Communists was that there was no other movement fighting Jim Crow and the exploitation of labor. The argument wilts under scrutiny. One way to scrutinize it is to look in the index and pick just one name—A. Philip Randolph, trade unionist and socialist. A staunch left-wing anticommunist throughout his life, Randolph is listed by Scales as one of the many public figures urging executive clemency to free Scales. But that's the only mention of Randolph in the entire book. True, the Communists had opposed the oppression of blacks. But no movement of the Communists in this field approached Randolph's effectiveness. His organization of the March on Washington in 1940 made President Roosevelt back down and sign an antidiscrimination ruling that Randolph dictated. And so too with Randolph's fight against continuing Jim Crow in the U.S. armed forces. Randolph is vivid proof that there were noncommunist, indeed anticommunist progressives, socialists, liberals, participating in the great battles for social freedom in our time. To Scales it seems that "when it came to opposing white supremacy, there was nowhere else to turn," but to the CP.

That said, it should be added that the state of black oppression was such that many young militants might be forgiven for joining what they thought was the most consistent opponent of apartheid in this country. *Cause at Heart* is must reading for those who want to know something about the history of our times. □

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Hook Replies

Editors:

In your Summer 1988 issue I am showered with abuse by Gordon K. Haskell allegedly for lying when in a previous communication I mention in passing that I was called a "Fascist" in the pages of the *New International*. Assuming that I was referring to something he wrote, Haskell proudly repeats all the choice insults he directed at me and cites the fact that he did not call me a Fascist as additional evidence of the wickedness of my "intellectual knuckle-ball."

So far as I am aware, I have never laid eyes on Mr. Haskell or read anything he or his colleague, Julius Falk, have ever written. Nor have I ever referred to them in any way since their existence was unknown to me.

My reference was to a piece by the well-known Trotskyist, J.R. Johnson, who denounced me as a Fascist in the *New International* in the early forties. This is confirmed in a letter to me by Irving Howe (April 5, 1949) in which he dissociated himself from Johnson and the whole incident. He characterized Johnson as "a completely irresponsible person," and added, "I vehemently protested about that when it happened." The only reason I mentioned the incident was to object to the anonymity of Alfred Kazin's slander of Professor van den Haag. I implied that the editors should have requested Kazin to identify by name the person he was victimizing so that Kazin would take full responsibility for his words and be unable subsequently to deny that he knew the person who was clearly identifiable by what he said of him.

I don't know what conceit or desire to call attention to himself led Mr. Haskell to imagine that because I cited the *New International,* I had *him* in mind. After all, I was often targeted for criticism in its pages. (Mr. Haskell reminds one of the insect who because an errant breeze had deposited him on Zeus at a climactic moment, boasted to all his friends that *he* and Zeus had ravished Europe.)

A simple inquiry would have enabled Haskell to discover the truth. Instead, with obvious delight, he rolls out a litany of insults hardly different from the choice epithets current in the Stalinist press of the time. It was factional practices such as these, together with their common Leninist doctrines that led me as early as the late thirties to declare that "Trotskyism is Stalinism *manqué*."

Finally, for the benefit of Mr. Haskell and his friends, and despite his contention to the contrary, I am *not* a "neoconservative." Since its founding, I have been a member of Social-Democrats, U.S.A., and am currently its Honorary Chairman.

SIDNEY HOOK
Stanford, Ca. □

The Palestinians

Editors:

A comment in your box on page 274 of the Summer 1988 issue, referring to an article by Ruth R. Wisse in *Commentary*. I too dislike *Commentary*'s politics and believe its editors and writers are insensitive to the plight of the Palestinians. But the charge that Ms. Wisse's reference to "people who breed, bleed, and advertise their misery" is racist misses her obvious intention: to say that *Arab governments* ("the Arab strategy") regard Palestinians as pawns who provide these services. She is accusing Arab leaders of contempt for the Palestinians, not displaying it herself. Don't get carried away.

JAMES BAKALAR
Cambridge, Mass. □

On Jackson

Editors:

As a peace activist of many years, I was deluged with charges that I was a racist when I decided not to support Jesse Jackson's campaign. Essentially all peace movement and liberal-radical literature presupposes support for Jackson.

The problem is not race. There are several problems. Jackson is inexperienced; the presidency is an important and powerful job, on which millions of lives could rest. The president should have proven that he/she can handle the job. Jackson is a reverend. We scoff at Pat Robertson's campaign, yet not at Jackson's. We should take the separation of church and state very seriously in this case. The third problem is Jackson's somewhat reckless handling of the Jewish question. His comment on "Hymietown" and his flirtations with Farrakhan make me question his judgment.

Thank you for publishing a more balanced view, in which you admit that it is possible for one to be left-wing, nonracist, and still not support Jackson.

ANDY PERRIN
Brookline, Mass. □

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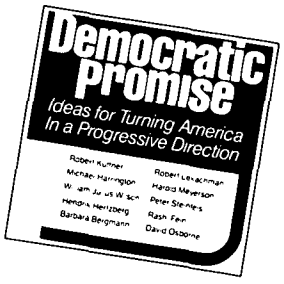

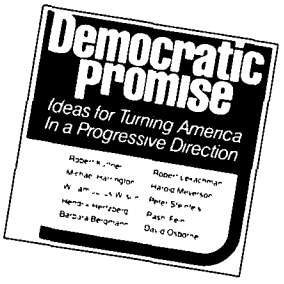

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